RIGHT AND WRONG THINKING

AND THEIR RESULTS

Aaron Martin Crane

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The Undreamed-of Possibilities which Man may achieve through his own Mental Control

BY

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BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

Published December, 1905.
Set up and electrotyped, December, 1905.
Second impression, January, 1906.
Third impression, April, 1906.
Fourth impression, September, 1906.
Fifth impression, March, 1907.
Sixth impression, August, 1907.
Seventh impression, April, 1908.
Eighth impression, September, 1908.
Ninth impression, April, 1909.
Tenth impression, March, 1910.
Eleventh impression, February, 1912.
Twelfth impression, May, 1914.

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Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

PREFACE

SOME years ago this book was born into thought by the perception of its fundamental principle, and it has been growing ever since. During the intervening years this principle and its allied ideas have been presented more or less fully in the form of independent class lectures to many groups of persons. It is with hesitation that it is now offered to the public in its present form, because it is still growing; but having seen the great advantages which have come to many from the practice of its principles, there arose the earnest desire to extend the opportunity for similar help to greater numbers.

The first lesson to be learned in the school of life is to understand one's own personality or individuality, so as to estimate it at its true value, and to be able to use it for good and to avoid using it for evil. A man should know all that can be known of the power which he is every day wielding simply by being what he is and by thinking, looking, speak-

ing, and acting as he does. It is one's duty to make the most and the best of what is in him; and he is best equipped for this who knows himself most thoroughly. The object of this book is to aid toward the accomplishment of this end.

There appear to be two influences in this world of ours, the good and the bad or the harmonious and the discordant, which permeate all mankind and shape and control all human actions. Wherever there are two, if one is removed, the other remains; if the discordant is removed, the harmonious will be left. Good, the absolutely harmonious, must be the enduring and essential because it is from God. Then an important part of the work of every one is to remove the evil or discordant and thus uncover the good. This includes the whole scheme of reformation, improvement, and progress.

Much of this book is devoted to external matters which man can detach from himself and throw away. By shaking out of his mind every cumbering thought of discord and error he may disclose to view the real man in all the perfection which his Creator bestowed upon him, and thus rise to that divine height of purity and perfection which has heretofore been deemed inaccessible.

There is another topic, higher and even more

attractive than this, which deals with the divine perfection inherent in man and in all creation; this is to be the subject of another book which is planned to follow this one.

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RIGHT AND WRONG THINKING

AND THEIR RESULTS

I

INTRODUCTION

NOTWITHSTANDING the immense amount of attention which has been directed in a broad general way to mind and its action, and although the constructive and creative ability of mind through thinking has been so long and so universally acknowledged, yet we are just now beginning to recognize the close and direct personal relation which thinking bears to man. The limits of the power of mind have never been clearly perceived, but recognition of their extent continually enlarges as knowledge and understanding increase.

The differences between ignorant and enlightened, between savage and civilized, between brute and man, are all due to mind and its action. All the multifarious customs and habits of mankind, whether simple or complex, though often attributed to other causes, are, from first to last, the direct

results of thinking. The unwritten history of the evolution of clothing, from its rude beginnings in the far-distant and forgotten past through all the ages since man first inhabited the earth, though at first glance seemingly simple, yet, as a whole, is wonderfully complex and astonishing in its particulars. Its story is only the story of the application of mind to the solution of a single one of the vast multitude of problems connected with human requirements.

It is true that our factories and palaces, our temples and our homes, are built of earthly material, but mind directed their fashioning into the vast multitude of forms, more or less beautiful, so lavishly displayed by architecture in city and country. The multitudinous products of constructive art which are scattered in lavish profusion over the whole earth are marvellous exhibitions of what mind has done; and these are being multiplied daily.

All the mechanical triumphs of every age are products of mental effort. Without these man would be in the condition of the animals. It has been said that he owes his supremacy over the lower creatures to his ability to construct and use tools, but this also depends entirely on his superior ability to think. The steam engine is one of these tools;

and the story of its creation and of the vast amount of mental effort which has contributed to its evolution can be written only in its larger parts because of the amount of time that has been expended upon it, the magnitude of the work, and the minuteness and complexity of its details.

In the domain of the fine arts more than elsewhere the creations are intimately connected with mental action and are distinctly marked as products of mind. Music, vocal and instrumental, the single singer or the multitude in the chorus, the one instrument or the great orchestra, the country boy whistling among the woods and hills or the grand opera in magnificent halls — music everywhere, in all its varieties and types, is a product of mental activity and is a most subtle as well as most powerful expression of the mind of the composer. The dreams of the sculptor which have been revealed in marble, those of the painter in the figures on his canvas, the beautiful in all artistic creations or expressions, are the direct result of the finest thinking of the finest minds. What a world of them there is in existence! Yet the crumbling ruins of the past point to greater worlds of them which have been destroyed by man and time.

Even a yet more important product of mind is

the literature of the world; in quantity, overwhelming; in variety, bewildering; in quality, whether ancient or modern, such as to excite the intensest wonder and admiration. There is no greater monument to the mind of man than the things which that mind has produced in science, philosophy, religion, and letters. This has grown like those ancient monuments to which every passer-by added a stone, and it will continue to grow so long as the human race exists.

Civilization with all that the word implies in every one of its unnumbered phases, its origin, continuance, progress, and present condition, is directly and exclusively a product of mind; and man owes to mind and its action all there is in the external world except the earth and its natural products. All religious, political, and social organisms have their root in mind, and they have assumed their present forms in consequence of the profoundest thinking of untold generations of men. To the same source man owes his own position, which is superior to all else on the earth and "only a little lower than the angels."

Notwithstanding the recognition of all these facts, it has remained for the scientific men of the present day, through their own intellectual attainments and

discoveries, to enlarge immensely upon this recognition and to show the complete supremacy and universality of mind in another domain. The horizon is rapidly widening in the direction of the mind's relation to man himself; and, as a result of the more recent discovery of facts, man is beholding undreamed-of possibilities which he may achieve through his own mental control. From the vantage ground already gained, mental and moral possibilities are rising to view in the near distance beside which the attainments of this and all past ages shrink into insignificance.

Only in these more recent years has it been clearly perceived that mind action is first in the order of occurrence, and that it is the absolute ruler of man himself as well as of all these wonderful works which mind has created. Mind is the motor power and governs everything, everywhere; but man can control mind, and therefore, by that control, he may be the imperious dictator of his mind's entire course, and, rising thence to the highest pinnacle of possibility, he may become the arbiter of destiny itself.

II

RELATION OF THINKING TO BODILY ACTION

MIND is that which thinks. Thinking is mind action. Thought is the result of mind action. This is a statement of what mind does, but it is neither a description nor a definition of mind. We know about mind only through our consciousness of its action, but because of this consciousness we know what we mean when we speak of mind and say it is that which thinks.[1]

In seeking for the sources of activity we find that in all human actions thinking is first in the order of occurrence; that is, man does not act unless he has first thought.

A word, even the most idle or habitual, noticed or unnoticed, must exist in the mind in the form of a thought before the vocal organs can utter it. Thinking may precede utterance only by a space of time

[1] It may be well to note definitely that thinking is not itself a thing, but is only an action. Mind is the thing, just as the hand is the thing, and its motion is only its action.

too short to be measured, nevertheless the thought of the word was in existence in the mind before the word could be spoken; and the same is true of every other action. This statement is necessarily correct because an expression, whatever its form, is always the utterance, or outward indication or manifestation, of some intention, emotion, thought, or feeling, and can never precede what it expresses; hence an act never precedes nor outruns thinking, but must always follow it.

The mechanic first plans, and then he constructs in accordance with his thinking. The architect may find defects in what he has built and pull it down to build in accordance with another plan, but such incidents only afford added illustrations of the truth of the proposition. He had to think before he built; the destruction was the result of thinking that followed the building; it preceded the pulling down, and other thinking preceded the rebuilding. "If there is one thing more than another which seems to the plain man self-evident, it is that his will counts for something in determining the course of events." But willing is the result of choosing, and both choosing and willing are modes of thinking.

This order of occurrence is fully illustrated in the simple act of lifting the hand. Contraction of the

muscle causes the motion of the hand; an impulse from the nerve causes the contraction of the muscle; some action in the brain sends the impulse along the nerve; thinking is the motive power, and without it there would not be any action of brain, nerve, or muscle. These are only parts of a machine; over them all is the power of mind without which the machine could not move; just as without the fire there could not be any steam in the boiler, and without the steam there could not be any motion of the piston, and without the motion of the piston the machinery of the factory could not move.

Frequently something outside of the mind causes the mind to act; but had the mind not acted, there would have been no bodily action, or had the mind acted differently, the bodily action would have been different also. It was the mental act which caused the bodily action and gave to it its peculiar character. But the mind may act independently without any provocation or stimulation exterior to itself, and the motion of the body will occur just the same, showing that mind action alone is the essential in the process.

If we grant all that may be claimed for the influence of external things upon the mind, it still remains that the mind is the power behind all else in moving

the body and that without it there would not be any motion. Additional and final proof of the truth of this proposition is found in the fact that if we remove the mind, as in death, the body cannot move. The nerves, muscles, tendons, and bones are parts of the machine — wonderful though inert — which the mind uses. In itself alone no portion of this machine has any more power than a crowbar when it is not grasped by the hand of the laborer.

"All acts are due to motive, and are the expression of design on the part of the actor. This is as true of the simplest as of the most complex actions of animals, whether consciously or unconsciously performed. The action of the Amœba in ingulfing a Diatom in its jelly, is as much designed as the diplomacy of the statesman, or the investigation of the scientist."[1] But motive is a kind of thinking or a state of mind, and thus this statement by Cope, while it includes all the actions of the entire animal kingdom under one general proposition, declares that they are all due to mind and its action.

The investigations of physiologists show how surpassingly wonderful is the force of mind when acting in connection with motion of the hand, even when

[1] Cope, *Origin of the Fittest*, p. 440. The Amœba is one of the lowest forms of animal life.

looked at from a material point of view. The forearm, considered mechanically, is a lever. The distance to the fulcrum from the point where the power is applied is, we may say, an inch. The distance from the fulcrum to the point where the weight lies in the hand is, say, fifteen inches. Then, in accordance with mechanical laws, the power put forth by the muscle to raise the weight must be fifteen times as much as the weight itself. An ordinarily strong man can raise a weight of fifty pounds. This means that the mind, acting through the muscle, in this instance exerts a force equal to fifteen times fifty, or seven hundred and fifty pounds. This is the force, represented in pounds, which the mind exerts in such a case.

But this is not all. If this same muscle which has operated under the force of seven hundred and fifty pounds should be removed from the arm and one end of it should be supported from a beam, a weight of fifty pounds attached to the other end would tear it asunder. This shows that the mind not only exerts a force of seven hundred and fifty pounds in lifting the weight, but at the same time a nearly equal force in holding the muscle together. A similar condition exists in connection with every muscular movement of the body.

There is an intimate and most wonderful relation between mind action and the action of the brain and nerve tissues, and between the nerve tissues and the various bodily organs. This relationship is such that certain actions of the mind set the nerves and muscles into activity. No one knows how the mind affects the brain to control it, nor how the nerve affects the muscle either to contract or to relax it. No one knows what the medium is between the mental and physical systems, nor even whether there is a medium. We only know that after the mind acts in its appropriate way these other actions follow in a certain order.

There is an extensive literature on this subject which sets forth many different theories and explanations. Some insist that no connection whatever exists between mind and matter, and therefore they claim that it is too much to say that these actions stand in the relationship toward each other of cause and effect; yet, practically, all admit that there will be no muscular or other bodily action if the mind does not act. This admission is sufficient because it sets forth exactly the condition which exists in connection with other cases of acknowledged cause and consequence. Thus, astronomers say that the sun causes the revolution of the planetary bodies,

but they have never been able really to show that any connection exists between the sun and those bodies, nor to give any satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon.

Even if it be granted that the relationship is not that of cause and consequence, but merely uniform sequence, the sequence follows substantially the same form and order as cause and consequence. It makes small practical difference whether we call it a chain of sequences or a chain of causes and consequences. Therefore it is sufficient for the purpose of this discussion to say that mental action is the cause of bodily actions for the reason that bodily actions always follow appropriate mental actions, and never occur without their initiative.

It is universally admitted that the facts of sensation prove the action of the body on the mind, and in like manner the facts of volition just as conclusively prove the action of the mind on the body. For instance, pain may be claimed to cause a movement of the body; but between the pain and the movement was the mind action perceiving the pain and directing those bodily actions. With this direction and adaptation pain has nothing whatever to do. It may be said that man eats because he is hungry, and that in this he is governed by physical sensation;

yet the consciousness of that sensation is a mental act of perception without which he would not eat, nor would there follow any of those complicated actions connected with digestion and assimilation. Thus analyzed it appears that it is mind action which sets the whole train in motion.

In the normal person the mental control of muscular action is wonderfully developed. The muscle moves in exact obedience to the mental command, as seen in the delicacy and accuracy as well as the strength and force of the movements. Note the forming of a letter with a pen on the written page, the strokes of the artist's brush upon his canvas, the exactness of touch of the musician's fingers upon the keys when he produces the precise tone that is required for the expression of his music — everywhere that delicacy and exactness are desired in the muscle they are produced by the mental action. It is called the result of training the muscle; in fact, it is training the muscle to obey the mind. If the mind has such control over muscular action, why may not its control over the other functions of the body be equally influential?

It may also be well to note right here a distinction that has often been overlooked. The movement of the arm is not the result of will power. A man may

will his arm to move as much as he pleases, but unless the mind itself acts in a manner different from simply willing the arm to move — unless the mind thinks something entirely distinct in character from the thought of willing — the arm remains stationary. Even if it should be contended that the motion of the arm is caused by will power, the fact still remains that will power is mind power because willing is a form of mental action and the result of choice, and choice is itself a mental action; therefore the general proposition that bodily action is the result of mental action is still correct.

These facts, clearly recognizable by every one, prove that the mind is not simply a group of physical conditions and combinations in action, nor is it a product of them, but that it is something entirely distinct from the physical system though acting on it, controlling it, and conferring on it powers which, in itself, it does not have; and since every bodily action may be resolved into elements closely similar to these here considered, if not identical with them in character and relationship, the proof becomes complete.

That which thinks is the master power which moves, directs, controls. The combination of brain, nerves, muscles, ligaments, bones — these constitute a most wonderful machine that the mind builds and uses.

III

INTENDED ACTIONS

ALL bodily actions may be separated into two classes, those intended and those not intended.

Thinking is the cause of all intended actions. The accuracy of this proposition is self-evident because intending, purposing, proposing, or designing is in itself thinking, and this kind of thinking is always the cause of this class of actions. One intends to call on a friend. If he did not think about it, he could not go. Having thought about it, if that thinking ceases, as, for instance, when he forgets, then going becomes impossible. This illustration, though simple, is conclusive of the truth of the proposition.

That a man has forgotten some mental action or was not aware of it when it occurred is no proof that it did not take place. A vast number of actions are preceded by unrecognized thoughts, but this does not furnish any exception to the universal truth of the proposition. On the contrary, it serves to sustain its accuracy; whether recognized or not, the thought was there in the mind doing its work.

A person is often able to recall unnoticed thinking of which he would never have become conscious had not some subsequent incident directed his attention to it. Who has not been so absorbed in a book that at the time he was not aware of a conversation going on in the room, or even of remarks addressed to himself, yet afterward has distinctly remembered hearing them? Simple incidents like this show that thinking often occurs without conscious recognition of it by the thinker. Psychologists say that the amount of unrecognized thinking is vastly in excess of that which is recognized.

The action of the skilled performer on the piano is an illustration of the way in which things that were at first the result of intended and clearly recognized thinking at last are done without any consciousness of that thinking. With the beginner every action is preceded by a fully recognized thought. The position at the piano, the poise of the shoulders and head, the control of the arms and hands, the action of the fingers, and just how they must be moved in each particular case for striking each key, and the force of each stroke — all these are the subjects of conscious thinking on the part of the student. Not a motion is made without previous thought, which includes not only the thought to move but also how that

motion is to be accomplished. After long-continued repetition of the motions included in the first and simpler lesson, when each thought has, so to speak, worn its own peculiar channel into the brain and has become so familiar that consciousness of it has somewhat waned, then a more difficult lesson is undertaken. The thinking which preceded the simpler actions gradually disappears, being displaced or submerged by the attention given to more difficult ones, until finally all conscious recognition of it ceases. With each step the thinking connected with the preceding practice drops gradually out of sight until at last the performer's conscious thought is all directed to expression. This requires careful attention to each of the many difficult and more delicate peculiarities of every single motion which, in proper combination, express the soul of music. These motions are necessarily preceded by an immense host of unnoticed thoughts, because without them the performer would be motionless and the instrument dumb.[1] Each step suggests to the mind the

[1] It is said that in rapid piano playing the finger makes twenty-four movements in a second and that each movement involves at least three muscular acts, making seventy-two of these acts in a second. It would be extremely interesting if one were able to compute in a similar manner the number of separate thoughts which preceded each muscular act.

next one to be taken, and thus the series moves in its accustomed order. Each motion is the result of unnoticed thinking which is as intentional in its character as it was when the beginner consciously and purposely initiated it.

Baldwin records a remarkable instance of this kind of action: "The case is cited of a musician who was seized with an epileptic attack in the midst of an orchestral performance, and continued to play the measure quite correctly while in a state of apparently complete unconsciousness. This is only an exaggerated case of our conscious experience in walking, writing, etc. Just as a number of single experiences of movement become merged in a single idea of the whole, and the impulse to begin the combination is sufficient to secure the performance of all the details, so single nervous reactions become integrated in a compound reflex." [1] But the "impulse to begin" is itself mental action, and without it no step of the performance could be undertaken.

This "impulse to begin" a certain piece of music which has been performed many times is followed by the thinking which produces the first motion, and that by the thinking and consequent action of the second, and so on to the end. The habit of thinking

[1] *Elements of Psychology*, p. 40.

a certain series of thoughts, each thought succeeding another in an invariable order, becomes so fully established by constant repetition that, once begun, they follow each other in their regular order without the conscious volition of the thinker. But if this habit has not been fully established, or if it has fallen into disuse from lack of practice, then difficulties arise and conscious thinking has to be called into action.

This tendency to do again what has often been done is clearly stated by Baldwin: "The thought of a movement has preceded and led to the movement so often, that there is a positive tendency, at the nerve centres, to the discharge of the energy necessary to the accomplishment of the act along the proper courses." [1]

The Italian psychologist, Mosso, has stated the case excellently. He says: "Every movement [in walking] is performed with difficulty; it is at first a task painfully learned; gradually it becomes less a matter of reflection; until at last one can scarcely call it voluntary. We may not call it automatic, because when the will to walk is wanting we do not move, but when we have once set out to walk or to make a journey, we may go on for a long time with-

[1] *Elements of Psychology*, p. 76.

out reflecting in the least that we are walking. . . . Many have experienced such extreme fatigue that they have slept while walking. There are endless phenomena proving that movements that at first cost a great effort of the will, become at length so habitual that we perform them without being aware of it." [1] The "will to walk," which is thinking, sets in motion that series of mind actions which results in walking, and the mind goes on controlling and directing the machinery of the body without the thinker's active consciousness. Mosso's words here quoted would apply with equal exactness to any series of complicated actions. The writer does not consciously think how he shall form his letters and words as he traces them; his conscious thought is engaged with the idea he wishes to express; but thoughts he is not aware of are continuously directing the motions of the many muscles which move the pen aright.

Lack of continuity of sense excitation has been recognized by most people. When the hand is placed in contact with any object, there is, through the sense of touch, an immediate and definite consciousness of certain conditions. If the hand remains in the same position, simply resting there

[1] *Fear*, p. 99.

without effort, the consciousness of these conditions gradually disappears. Though the course of activity flows in the opposite direction, yet it is clearly recognized that the mind itself affects the physical activities very much in the same way that the sense excitations affect the mind. In the sense excitations, continuous action results in their disappearance from the mental horizon. May not the elements of consciousness which are aroused by mental action fade out of sight in a similar way though the mental activity be as constantly present as the physical conditions under the hand? If so, this presents sufficient explanation of the disappearance from consciousness of those thoughts which have been made habitual by frequent repetition, and it also explains many, if not all, of those actions which are called reflex or automatic.

All this shows that "the thought of a movement," or "the impulse to begin," which is the mental intention to perform certain actions, is that which sets in motion the complicated machinery of the body, and its action could not occur without it. Therefore in every minute particular the proposition holds true that thinking, either noticed or unnoticed, is the cause of all intended action.

IV

ACTIONS NOT INTENDED

Not only does thinking precede all intended human actions, but it also precedes all those which were not intended.

A person does not often shed tears because he proposes to do so. Usually tears come unbidden; frequently after every possible effort has been made to suppress them; yet they flow because of thinking which preceded them. The explanation is simple. It is the office of the tear gland to furnish a fluid to moisten the eye. The same delicate and intimate relation exists between the mental condition of grief and the action of the tear gland that exists between other varieties of thinking and muscular action. When the mind is filled with thoughts of grief, increased activity in the tear gland follows, its fluid is produced in an unusual and excessive quantity, and the eyes overflow. Thoughts of grief acting upon the tear gland stimulate it to excessive action in just the same way that those thoughts

which constitute intention move the hand. The important fact in this connection is that although the weeping is not intended, it is caused by a particular mental action which precedes it. When the grief ceases, the excessive action of the tear gland subsides, the tears no longer flow, and the facial muscles return to their usual condition.

Entirely different actions follow if the thinking is of a humorous, witty, or ludicrous character. A great many muscles all over the body, but particularly in the chest, throat, and face, are thrown into violent spasmodic activity which is uncontrollable if the thinking is intense. This is clearly the unintended effect of thinking, because it often occurs when the desire not to laugh is very strong, showing that in such cases intention plays only a subordinate part. The laughter does not cease until the thinking that produced it ceases, and it is renewed with the renewal of that thinking. It is clear that these muscles move in response to the action of the person's mind, though without his intention to move them.

Every one is aware of many physical changes which are caused by changes in the mental conditions. The mental state of anger will make the heart beat more rapidly, send the blood rushing

through the body with increased velocity, and flush or pale the face. Any sudden emotion of grief or pleasure, unexpected news, either good or bad, suspense or anticipation, waiting for news of something impending, — these and many other disturbing thoughts make the heart beat faster or slower, or even stop it entirely, according to the character of the mental action. Thoughts of fear may cause a cold perspiration to break out over the whole body, send the blood away from its surface, or even cause such muscular tension or paralysis that severe illness follows, and sometimes death.

The unnoticed glandular changes are very numerous. Propose some particularly appetizing food to a hungry person, and instantly, without the slightest intention, the thinking sets the salivary glands into action. All the acts of digestion, assimilation, and general nutrition are of this kind. It has been shown conclusively that they are results of thinking, that they vary with the variations of the thinking, and that without it they do not occur; yet they are not intended, and we are not even aware of the existence of the larger part of them, nor of much of the thinking which produces them.

Recent physiological experiments show distinctly just what might have been expected from the com-

mon experiences of every one who has noticed the flow of saliva in response to his own thoughts. When food that he liked was offered to an animal, it caused not only an abundant flow of saliva, but of gastric juice as well, even though no food had entered the stomach. More than that, when the kind of food was recognized by the animal, the character of the secretion was adapted to it, so that each variety provoked the secretion of a special kind of digestive fluid. The better the animal liked the food, the more copious was the quantity of those fluids which are necessary to digestion. It was not necessary that the animal should even see or smell the food. A purely mental condition caused by suggestion or the association of acts was enough, and it was shown that pleasure itself set the physical actions into motion. On the contrary, when food which was objectionable to the animal entered the stomach, secretion of digestive fluid did not follow. When communication between the brain and the stomach had been cut off, so that the mind could not send messages to the stomach and its glands, not a drop of gastric juice was produced even though the food which he liked had been shown to him or had been introduced into the stomach, thus showing that the presence of the food without any

mental stimulus does not induce the actions attendant upon digestion and necessary to it.[1] Something more than mere mechanical contact was essential.

These experiments show beyond question that digestion depends entirely upon some mental process. Similarly, all bodily actions depend upon thinking, whether that thinking is intended or not; and without thinking, or when the thinking does not reach the organs which should act, as when the thought effect could not be communicated to the glands of the stomach, there is no bodily action.

It must be remembered, however, that there may be, and often is, a longer or shorter series of unnoticed bodily or mental actions between the inciting thought and the result which has attracted attention. The observed condition may be at the end of the series and far removed from the thought that caused it. This intervention of unnoticed intermediary incidents renders it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to discover the direct connection between the final event and the thinking that produced it. Inability to trace the connection between the observed consequence and its real cause does not destroy the truth of the original proposition that the cause existed in mental action.

[1] Dr. Romme, in *La Revue* for August, 1902.

Every sensitive person knows how the mental state induced by hearing bad news will sometimes interfere seriously with the act of digestion. Perhaps the victim wakes the next morning with a violent headache. His physician tells him that it is due to a disordered stomach. The mental condition of the day before has been forgotten by one and is seldom heard of by the other, therefore both insist honestly enough that the headache was not caused by mental conditions. Yet he would not have had the headache if he had not indulged in that discordant thinking which disturbed the action of certain nerves; this disturbance interfered with the normal action of the stomach, which in its turn affected the head. This is unintended bodily action caused by thinking, and shows how easily some of the incidents are overlooked which connect the cause with the observed consequence.

The necessity for the presence and action of mind is also seen in reflex actions and those which seem to be automatic. When the exterior or surface end of a nerve is excited, as by the prick of a pin, psychologists say that this creates an activity which extends along the fibres of the ingoing nerve either to some central ganglion or to the brain; that certain actions take place there, and then

another impulse is sent thence along the outgoing nerve to the appropriate muscle, producing in it the requisite action. These actions at the nerve centre must be more or less complicated and of peculiar character. Something must decide what physical action should follow the recognized external conditions, and then it must select from all the other outgoing nerves the special one which shall carry the message to the particular muscle which should act, and must thus direct and control the specific action which that muscle shall perform. This may be merely to remove the hand from the position it occupied when the finger was pricked, or it may be to double the fist and inflict a blow, or it may be to cause certain complicated actions which shall remove the offending object to another place. This is more than mere mechanics. It is the action of the master directing subordinates in accordance with the recognized requirements of the situation.

Whether the person is aware of it or not, there must be mental consciousness or recognition of the conditions at the end of the disturbed ingoing nerve, because something decides what is the appropriate action, selects from many others the proper agents to accomplish it, and inspires the action in those agents. In every such case there

is selection or choice, and choice is itself a mental action based on consciousness, which is also mental. Discrimination must govern choice, and intelligence must direct the proceedings. It is only mind that examines conditions, decides whether or not to act, selects from a number of possibilities, chooses the kind of action to be undertaken by some one or many muscles, and sends forth its behest through the appropriate nerve to the right destination.

In every case the muscular action is a manifestation of more or less consciousness of surroundings, discrimination, choice, and judgment. What occurs corresponds exactly to the mental recognition of the conditions. Because of repetition conscious thinking emerges less and less into view until it becomes habitual, and finally it passes entirely out of sight, and the action is called automatic or mechanical. A vast multitude of tendencies toward these actions are inherited from birth, but their origin was in the thinking of generations of ancestors.

Thinking which originates solely in the mind and has no connection with anything outside of it, may act upon the nerve tissues and originate brain, nerve, and muscle action, just the same as when there is some outside incident to suggest it. Bald-

win says: "Suggestion by idea, or through consciousness, must be recognized to be as fundamental a kind of motor stimulus as the direct excitation of a nerve organ." [1] All the organs of the body are subject to stimulation by purely mental states; that is, a nerve stimulus may come from within in the form of a self-originating act of the mind. Not only this, but psychologists and physiologists say that these thought impulses may be made to change nerve tracks already formed and even to originate new ones and thus find outward expression in better forms of doing. Not only will the severed nerve reunite, but even when a piece of the nerve has been removed, each of the two ends will send out filaments toward the other until they are joined again, provided the distance is not too great.

It may be urged that the purely involuntary muscles, so-called, act without previous thinking; but as already shown, a vast majority if not all of the reflex actions are clearly the results of intended actions which have been very often repeated. The distance from reflex action to what is known as involuntary action may be very short, and the division between them is never clearly defined so that it is often difficult if not impossible to decide which

[1] *Mental Development of the Child and the Race*, p. 104.

is to be called reflex and which involuntary. Some biologists, reasoning from the known to the unknown, hold the opinion that all such actions are consequences of conscious thinking. Their reasoning is all the more convincing when it is remembered that mind is always attendant upon life, never being found separate from it, and that life is the progenitor and creator of all life; for life has never been found without antecedent life. Then mind acting in conjunction with life must be the power which sets the involuntary muscles into activity.

The heart beats without our conscious attention, yet we know that its action is greatly influenced by mental conditions, such as anxiety, grief, fear, or joy. Though we may not be able to discover any special action of the mind upon the heart to keep it going, yet when the mind is removed, as by death, the heart ceases to act. This is true of all the so-called involuntary organs, and shows that mind action of some sort is necessary to keep them in motion. We do not think for the purpose of making the heart beat, just as we do not think for the purpose of making the tears flow; but our thinking makes them flow and our thinking causes the heart to beat. In one case we are aware of the thinking, in the other we are not, just as the piano player is

at one time aware of the thinking that moves his fingers and at another time is not.

The physical body, separate from anything else, is an inert material mass, incapable of originating any action; therefore all its action must be produced by something other than itself. That which causes its action must be mind.

The conclusion is unavoidable that thinking precedes and causes all those actions which were not intended as well as those which were intended. Since these two classes include all human actions, it follows that thinking, or mind action, is always first in the order of occurrence and is related to the bodily actions as a cause is related to its consequence.

V

A GENERAL PROPOSITION

THINKING is the cause of all that a man is and of all that he does. Then, since it is mind that thinks, it follows that mind is antecedent to thinking and to all that is caused by thinking; therefore mind is first. Mind stands as the cause behind all which thus far has been considered. This is not a new proposition; neither is there any mystery about it. It is within the comprehension of every one who has observed his own mental actions because it is a part of his own experience, and he finds within himself the proof of the proposition.

Up to this place the subject has been considered from an external point of view and the reasoning has been inductive in its character. There is another and larger method, the deductive, which results in the same conclusions, only it enlarges their scope and makes them universal in their applications.

God is the one infinite First Cause and, therefore, the cause of all. As the one cause, or Creator,

He is the Creator of all. In one of the aspects in which He is recognized by man, God is Mind; therefore, in the largest and most inclusive possible application of the term, in the infinite whole as in each particular instance, mind and mind action is first in the order of occurrence because God is Mind and He is the first actor, and the originator of all that is. This is the statement of a universal proposition which includes all things that are.

Mind is an essential of man's existence; and its action, which he perceives within himself and calls thinking, is the first of all his actions in the order of their occurrence, and the cause of all the others. In this there is somewhat of likeness to the Infinite; and, though man and his activities are only incidents in the midst of immensity, yet, in this respect at least, he is following one universal order in obedience to one central universal principle. Just as all that exists is the result of the action of the infinite divine Mind, God, similarly all that man does is the result of the action of man's own mind.

VI

AS SEEN BY OTHERS

A WISE modern writer, following a declaration of Socrates, has said that we should never ask who are the advocates of any teaching, but only, is it true? A statement of philosophy or principle once made clear and understood is not strengthened by appeal to any authority. While all this is undeniably true, yet it is also true that the wisest of men feel added confidence in their opinions when they know that other wise men agree with them; hence any man may be excused if he feels more comfortable when he finds that others, who have given the subject more careful and thorough investigation than he himself has been able to give it, unite in the declaration that mind action precedes bodily action as cause precedes consequence.

President Hall, of Clark University, is reported as saying, before a session of the American Medico-Psychological Society in Boston, that "the relations between the body and the emotions are of the clos-

est," and "there can be no change of thought without a change of muscle." He also suggests the possibility that the right course in thinking might develop muscle as well as the right course of exercise. On President Hall's basis, if the proper course of thinking is maintained the muscles will take care of themselves.

Professor J. M. Baldwin, of Princeton, italicizing his statement, says: "Every state of consciousness tends to realize itself in an appropriate muscular movement."[1]

Professor C. A. Strong, of Columbia University, says: "Recent psychologists tell us that *all* mental states are followed by bodily changes — that all consciousness leads to action. This is true of desires, of emotions, of pleasures and pains, and even of such seemingly non-impulsive states as sensations and ideas. It is true, in a word, of the entire range of our mental life. The bodily effects in question are of course not limited to the voluntary muscles, but consist in large part of less patent changes in the action of heart, lungs, stomach, and other viscera, in the caliber of blood-vessels and the secretion of glands."[2]

[1] *Elements of Psychology*, p. 308.
[2] *Why the Mind has a Body*, p. 20.

Professor James, of Harvard University, says: "*All mental states* (no matter what their character as regards utility may be) *are followed by bodily activity of some sort.* They lead to inconspicuous changes in breathing, circulation, general muscular tension, and glandular or other visceral activity, even if they do not lead to conspicuous movements of the muscles of voluntary life. Not only certain particular states of mind, then (such as those called volitions, for example), but states of mind as such, *all* states of mind, even mere thoughts and feelings, are *motor* in their consequences." [1] Language cannot be more positive or unequivocal, yet later he stated the case with equal clearness though perhaps in language a little less technical: —

"The fact is that there is no sort of consciousness whatever, be it sensation, feeling, or idea, which does not directly and of itself tend to discharge into some motor effect. The motor effect need not always be an outward stroke of behavior. It may be only an alteration of the heart beats or breathing, or a modification of the distribution of the blood, such as blushing or turning pale; or else a secretion of tears, or what not. But, in any case, it is there in some shape when any consciousness is there;

[1] *Psychology*, edition 1893, p. 5. The italics are his.

and a belief as fundamental as any in modern psychology is the belief at last attained that conscious processes of any sort, conscious processes merely as such, must pass over into motion, open or concealed." [1]

Professor Ladd, of Yale, says: "Even the most purely vegetative of the bodily processes are dependent for their character upon antecedent states of mind." [2]

Professor Munsterberg, of Harvard, said, in his Lowell Institute lectures, that the slightest thought influences the whole body; and, further: "There is never a particle of an idea in our mind which is not the starting-point for external discharge," or in less technical language, the starting-point for some bodily action. In illustration he said that thinking increases the activity of the minute perspiration glands of the skin. This has been measured so accurately by the proper apparatus that it is possible to determine the activity or intensity of a person's thinking by its effects upon those glands.

Hudson says: "No scientist will deny the existence within us of a central intelligence which controls the bodily functions, and through the sympa-

[1] *Talks to Teachers*, p. 170.

[2] *Physiological Psychology*, p. 75.

thetic nervous system actuates the involuntary muscles, and keeps the bodily machinery in motion." [1]

An eminent French psychologist has stated the conditions correctly regarding fear, and incidentally of other emotions as well, when he says: "If we are ignorant of danger, we do not fear it;" and this is a plain statement of the experience of every one. Fear, as all know, is a mental action or condition, and therefore it follows that the acts caused by fear are the consequences of mental action.

The whole is admirably stated in the declaration: "He (the psychologist) acknowledges, in response to a logical demand, that every single psychical (mental) fact has its physiological counterpart." [2] But this is no more than Professor James has said in his book, *Talks to Teachers:* "Mentality terminates naturally in outward conduct," and he might have added that this is unavoidable, for that idea is included in the preceding quotations from his pen.

Following in the same direction, the great English naturalist, Romanes, says the fact of selective contraction is the criterion of mind and the indication of consciousness, and he finds this fact of selective con-

[1] *The Law of Mental Medicine*, p. 33.
[2] *Psychology and Life*, p. 42.

traction in the lowest known creatures.[1] He says also that "all possible mental states have their signs."[2] These signs must necessarily be those of external physical conditions which result from mental states.

President McCosh, of Princeton, says of emotion: "It begins with a mental act, and throughout is essentially an operation of the mind. Examine any case of emotion and you will always discover an idea as a substratum of the whole."

Professor Mosso, the Italian psychologist already quoted, constructed an apparatus by which the body of a man could be balanced in a horizontal position. This was made so sensitive that it oscillated according to the rhythm of the respiration. He says: "If one speaks to a person while he is lying on the balance horizontally, in equilibrium and perfectly quiet, it inclines immediately toward the head. The legs become lighter and the head heavier. This phenomenon is constant, whatever pains the subject may take not to move, however he may endeavor not to alter his breathing, to suspend it temporarily, not to speak, to do nothing which may produce a more copious flow of blood to the brain."

[1] Quoted approvingly by Baldwin in *Mental Development of Man*, p. 210.

[2] Quoted by Baldwin in *Mental Development of Man*, p. 222.

He says of the same experiment when the subject was sleeping: "Scarcely had some one about to enter touched the handle of the door, than the balance inclined toward the head, remaining immovable in this position for five or six or even ten minutes, according to the disturbance produced in the sleep. . . . When all was quiet, one of us would intentionally make a slight noise by coughing, scraping a foot on the ground, or moving a chair, and at once the balance inclined again toward the head, remaining immovable for four or five minutes, without the subject's noticing anything or waking. . . . It was proved by my balance that, at the slightest emotion, the blood rushes to the head." [1]

These experiments show beyond question that the slightest possible mental activity changes the course of the blood and sends it to the head in such quantities as to destroy the equilibrium and to overweight that end of the body. They show also how the slightest thought has its physical effect, and, as in the case of the sleeping man, that the thought which is not perceived and does not awaken him is as certain to affect his condition as the one of which he is conscious.

Dr. William G. Anderson, director of the Yale

[1] *Fear*, p. 97 and following.

gymnasium, has made similar observations upon the athletes of that University with like results. A man perfectly balanced on the table would find his feet sinking if he went through mental leg gymnastics, thinking about moving his legs without making the movements. This shows that it is thinking which sends the blood to the legs even when they are entirely at rest. He balanced students before and after their written examinations, and after the mental test found that the centre of gravity had changed toward the head, varying in different cases from only a sixteenth of an inch to almost two and a half inches.

Dr. Anderson says: "Experiments comparing agreeable exercises with those that are not so agreeable showed that movements in which men took pleasure set in motion a richer supply of blood than did those which were not to their liking. . . . Pleasurable thoughts send blood to the brain; disagreeable ones drive it away." Not merely the thinking but its character or quality influences the physical actions, and the old poet was right when he wrote: "In whate'er you sweat indulge your taste."

The stigmata are among the most extreme examples of the action of thinking in producing abnormal physical conditions. St. Francis of Assisi

furnishes the earliest historical case. His contemplation of the wounds of Jesus was of such an intense character and so long continued that his own body finally presented appearances similar to the mental picture which he had so long entertained. Not only were there similar wounds in his hands, in his feet, and in his side, but the appearance of nails in the wounds was so realistic that after his death the attempt was made to draw them out, supposing them to be really nails. There have been something like ninety or a hundred well-authenticated cases of a similar character since the time of St. Francis. For a long while it was believed by many that these conditions were results of self-inflicted wounds or that the story of them was mere fabrication. Some were probably fraudulent, but others were so well authenticated as to remove all doubt. Parallel cases of physical effects due to mental suggestion are well known. Experiments are now often performed in psychological laboratories which, by means of mental action, produce appearances similar to the stigmata.[1] If abnormal physical conditions of such extreme character can be produced by thinking, certainly healthy and normal

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica,* subjects "Stigmata" and "Stigmatization."

ones can be produced and maintained by the same means.

Professor Elmer Gates, of the Laboratory of Psychology and Psychurgy, Washington, D.C., showed the same motor influence and effect of mind action in an entirely different way. He plunged his arm into a jar filled with water up to the point of overflow. Keeping his position without moving, he directed his thinking to the arm, with the result that the blood entered the arm in such quantities as to enlarge it and cause the water in the jar to overflow. This is merely demonstrating by another method the same facts that were shown by Professor Mosso and Dr. Anderson.

Professor Gates went even further than this. By directing his thoughts to his arm for a certain length of time each day for many days he permanently increased both its size and strength, and he instructed others so that they could produce the same effect on various organs of the body, thus demonstrating the accuracy of President Hall's statement that muscle can be developed by a proper course of thinking as well as by exercise.

Professor Gates has shown the causative character of thinking in a long series of most comprehensive and convincing experiments. He found

that change of the mental state changed the chemical character of the perspiration. When treated with the same chemical reagent, the perspiration of an angry man showed one color, that of a man in grief another, and so on through the long list of emotions, each mental state persistently exhibiting its own peculiar result every time the experiment was repeated. These experiments show clearly, as indicated by Professor James's statements, that each kind of thinking, by causing changes in glandular or visceral activity, produced different chemical substances which were being thrown out of the system by the perspiration.

When the breath of Professor Gates's subject was passed through a tube cooled with ice so as to condense its volatile constituents, a colorless liquid resulted. He kept the man breathing through the tube but made him angry, and five minutes afterward a sediment appeared in the tube, indicating the presence there of a new substance which had been produced by the changed physical action caused by a change of the mental condition.[1] Anger gave a brownish substance; sorrow, gray; remorse, pink; etc., showing, as

[1] This is distinctly a case where none of the actions were intended, and yet were clearly caused by thinking.

in the experiments with the perspiration, that each kind of thinking had produced its own peculiar substance, which the system was trying to expel.

Professor Gates's conclusions are very definite: "Every mental activity creates a definite chemical change and a definite anatomical structure in the animal which exercises the mental activity." And again he says: "The mind of the human organism can, by an effort of the will, properly directed, produce measurable changes of the chemistry of the secretions and excretions." He also says: "If mind activities create chemical and anatomical changes in the cells and tissues of the animal body, it follows that all physiological processes of health or disease are psychologic processes and that the only way to inhibit, accelerate, or change these processes is to resort to methods properly altering the psychologic, or mental, processes."[1] That is, the most effective and best way to change these physical processes is to change the thinking. And again he says: "All there is of health and disease is mind activity." And once more: "If we can know how to regulate mind processes, then we can cure disease

[1] *Medical Times*, December, 1897.

—all disease."[1] In another place he says: "Mind activity creates organic structure, and organisms are mind embodiments."[2]

In full accord with this is Professor Andrew Seth, of the chair of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, who, at the close of a long argument showing the priority of mind, concludes: "But mechanism is thus, in every sense, posterior to intelligence and will; it is a means created and used by will. In a strict sense, will creates the reflex mechanism to which it afterwards deputes its functions."[3] But will is a mental action or condition, therefore mind action is veritably first in the order of occurrence.

Cope, in summing up his exhaustive arguments on the subject, clearly and concisely declares the priority of mind and its creative power in these words: "Structure is the effect of the control over matter exercised by mind."[4] A more definite statement is not possible; all physical structure is created and determined by mind as its cause.

Christison says: "It is a biologic axiom that function precedes organism; for while we may

[1] *Medical Times*, December, 1897.
[2] *New Crusade*, October, 1897, p. 69.
[3] *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 105.
[4] *Origin of the Fittest*, p. 232.

also say that necessity develops function in much the same sense that we say that it is the mother of invention, it is evident that the use of means to a given end implies the preëxistence of a specific potentiality, having a plan in the abstract, for only the preëxisting can be the cause of a necessity. Thus it follows that something of a mind must exist before a brain can be formed." [1] In other words, the necessity must be recognized before it can produce any action; but that recognition of necessity is the mental action which precedes all the other actions.

The great Lamarck, the pioneer of Darwin, says: "It is not the organ, that is, the nature and form of the parts of the body, which have given origin to its habits and peculiar functions, but it is, on the contrary, its habits, its manner of life, and the circumstances in which individuals from which it came found themselves, which have, after a time, constituted the form of the body, the number and character of its organs, and the functions which it possesses."

Cope says: "The general proposition that life has preceded organization in the order of time, may be regarded as established." In connection with some consideration of "the law of use

[1] *Brain in Relation to Mind*, p. 13.

and effort," he says that "animal structures have been produced, directly or indirectly, by animal movements," and that, "as animal movements are primitively determined by sensibility, or consciousness, consciousness has been and is one of the primary factors in the evolution of animal forms." He adds further on: "The origin of the acts is, however, believed to have been in consciousness." [1] All this points to the one fact that mind was the originator of organic structure, because consciousness is an action of mind.

Evans, discussing the initial activities, says the same thing: "In the germ of the animal body, as in the seed of the plant, there is the living idea of the future organism. And that idea forms the body after the pattern of itself. It is function (or idea) that creates the appropriate organ, and not the organ that makes the function. For instance, the heart is made to beat, and this action commences before its tissues are formed, even when it is only a mass of protoplasmic jelly. So it is always the function, the idea, which creates its organic expression. Thus it is, and of necessity must be, in regard to the whole body." [2]

[1] *Origin of the Fittest*, pp. 422–425.
[2] *Primitive Mind-Cure*, p. 125.

This array of authorities might be increased indefinitely. Enough have been quoted to show great unanimity of opinion on the fundamental proposition that thinking is first in the order of occurrence and that bodily actions follow thinking as consequence follows cause.

VII

MUTUAL REACTIONS OF MIND AND BODY

MENTAL and physical actions, though absolutely distinct, are most intimately connected. As day and night are closely joined by the intermingled light and darkness of twilight, so are the mental and physical activities of human beings, yet they are as clearly distinguishable from each other as light from darkness. In this chapter they are represented as entirely separate for the purpose of attaining a clear understanding of their mutual relations. They always occur in the following order: —

First. Mind action, or thinking, noticed or unnoticed, precedes all other action.

Second. Mind action is always followed by physical or bodily action of some kind, whatever may be the explanation of the connection or relation between the two.

Third. The mind perceives this resultant bodily action or condition.[1]

[1] Professor Strong in his book, *Why the Mind has a Body*, p. 318, says: "The sequences of physical events upon mental are as uni-

Fourth. This second mental action unites with the first and already existent mental action or condition. The sum of both, in its turn, acts on the physical in the same way that the first did, and, by a force increased by the added impulse of the second, it increases, intensifies, or otherwise changes the resultant physical actions and conditions.

That is to say, the person becomes aware of the changed physical condition consequent upon his first thinking, and the mental state thus produced is added to the one already in existence. Thus a new mental condition is set up composed of the original thought which produced the first bodily action and of the other thought which succeeded that bodily action. In their turn these two combined again act upon the body with the increased force of their combination. In this way the mental and physical actions follow one another until something occurs to arrest the progress or change the course of the mental action.[1]

form as those of mental events upon physical, volition being as regularly followed by movement as stimulus by sensation."

[1] An order of occurrence introducing other elements might be stated as follows: (1) mind, the thinker; (2) thinking, or mind action; (3) the thought or idea, the result of thinking; (4) choice, the result of combination and comparison of thoughts; (5) will, the determination to act; (6) action. But this analysis does not interfere with the above order nor weaken it.

It appears very clearly from the foregoing analysis that mental actions and conditions, in every case, precede and cause all bodily actions and conditions. It is not only mental action which originates bodily action in the first place, but it is mental action which afterward increases or intensifies the bodily action; and it is through the mind's recognition of bodily conditions, and not otherwise, that the bodily actions become the occasion for further bodily changes.

As has already been said, the mind may originate thought within itself independent of any suggestion from an external source, and it is therefore correct to say that we often "feel" pure thought; that is, we recognize the changed physical conditions following that thinking which had no cause outside of the mind.[1] This is necessarily the case because, as Professor James says,

[1] This mental consciousness of the new bodily conditions which have been caused by thinking constitutes what we call "feeling"; and a person speaks as accurately when he says, "I feel sad because of the loss of a friend," as when he says, "I feel hurt because of a blow." In both cases the words are used to designate the mental consciousness of certain new physical conditions, and include in their meaning both the conditions and the consciousness of the changes. In one case it is thinking that has changed the bodily conditions; in the other it is thinking also, but we attribute the change to the blow.

"All mental states are followed by bodily activity of some sort." That it was thinking, even though unnoticed, which caused the feeling and its peculiarities is shown by the fact that, if thoughts consciously in the mind are changed, the feelings will change with the change of thought. It is thinking alone which originates feeling and afterwards becomes aware of it. The mind even notes its own action as well as the actions of the various portions of the body and of external things; and each of these three may cause further action in the mind, to be followed by other and consequent action in the body.

The originating mental action, the first in the series, being almost or quite instantaneous, is often entirely unnoticed by the thinker; but this failure to perceive it does not change the fact of its existence, nor prevent its legitimate result from taking place in the body. Because we are not always aware of the initial or originating action of the mind, and because of the consequent undue prominence which, for this reason, is usually given to those physical conditions which constitute the second action in the series, the erroneous opinion is entertained that physical action is sometimes an originating cause. It is true that bodily condi-

tions affect mental actions when the mind takes note of them, just the same as when the mind takes note of any action or condition external to the body; but we must not lose sight of the fact that if the mind does not take note of those bodily conditions, no further bodily changes will take place; besides, in every case the bodily condition, whether noted by the mind or not, is itself the result of some mental action which preceded it.

This order of occurrence may be illustrated by the case of the man and the bear. (1) The man has, stored in his mind, certain ideas regarding the dangerous character of bears. (2) When he sees a wild bear in the woods, these ideas recur and thoughts of danger (fear) dominate, if they do not obliterate, all other thinking. (3) As a consequence of this course of thinking, and probably without being conscious at the time of any mental action whatever, he decides instantly that the proper thing is to remove himself from the presence of the bear as soon as possible; (4) and therefore he runs. The running is a physical action resulting from the preceding and somewhat complicated mental actions. If he had not had those previous thoughts about the character of

bears, or if he had not become aware of the presence of the bear (and this is a mental action), he would not have run. That thinking which caused fear was a necessary precedent to the running. (5) As he runs, his mind notes the new bodily conditions attendant upon his running, and these, being discordant, increase the discordant thinking already in his mind. Although his running began because of his fear-thought, yet his running increases his fear and he is more scared because he runs. (6) The new mental condition of fright occasioned by his mental perception of the physical action of running is added to the fear he had before, and a panic follows. (7) But when he perceives that he has put such a distance between himself and the bear that he is safe (here also is mental action resulting in the mental conclusion) this thought of safety takes the place of his former thoughts, (8) and he stops running.

Or the condition might be worse; on becoming conscious of the nearness of the bear, and remembering the bad things he has believed about bears, his mental condition may be so intense as to induce paralysis and make it impossible for him to move. The intensity of his fear, increased by his recognition of his inability to move, may cause all physical

action to cease. The man is thus frightened to death. Thinking killed him.

Looking at the subject from the purely physical point of view, the physiologist tells us there are two kinds of nerve fibres, connected at their inner ends by ganglia, each kind having entirely different duties. Professor James sets this forth very definitely and clearly in his *Introduction to Psychology*, page 7, where he says: —

"Anatomically, therefore, the nervous system falls into three main divisions, comprising —

"(1) the fibres which carry the currents in;

"(2) the organs of central redirection of them; and

"(3) the fibres which carry them out.

"Functionally, we have sensation, central reflection, and motion, to correspond to these anatomical divisions."

The fibres which are included in Professor James's first division are those which bring to our consciousness the news from the outside world, as the prick of a pin, the feeling of the object on which the hand rests, the sound of the locomotive whistle, the sight of an animal, or any one of the numberless external things of which our senses tell us. The second division, or "organs of cen-

tral redirection," *i.e.* the brain and ganglia, or nerve centres, receive the news from without and change what might otherwise be mere unintelligent mechanical action into actions that can only be explained by the intervention of intelligence giving its orders for the various activities which are to take place. Every ganglion is an organ where mind comes in contact with materiality to control it or to be influenced by it, according to the mental discipline which the mind has received. This is the point where the mental appears to touch the material to control it. Lastly, the fibres of the third division carry the orders to those organs which are to act and, in compliance with mental direction, set up in them the requisite activity.

Professor Ladd, of Yale, in the following technical language, describes very accurately these actions and offices of the nerves in producing our awareness of external things and our succeeding physical actions: —

"To know that the mechanical or chemical action of stimuli on the end organs of sense starts a mysterious molecular commotion in the axis-cylinders of the centripetal nerves, and that this commotion propagates itself, as a process of an

uncertain character, to the central nervous mass, and there, as a process yet more mysterious, lays the physical basis for a special forth-putting of the life of conscious sensation; . . . to know these things, and the grounds on which they rest, is to be scientific as respects physiological and psycho-physical questions of the most important kind."[1]

[1] *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 60.

VIII

INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL INCIDENTS

THINKING is the initial act of all human actions, but external incidents in many cases precede thinking and provoke it. Whenever the external suggestive incident is taken into consideration, the order of occurrence is as follows: —

First. The external incident presents itself.

Second. This is followed by thinking of some kind.

Third. Some bodily action takes place which is the result of that thinking.

Fourth. Then occur the events which follow in their natural order.

We see the incident, we think about it, we act; and then follow the events consequent on that action. The factor governing our action and deciding its character is the thinking and not the occurrence. It is an error to believe that the incident is the governing power. We fall into this error because we fail to note the part played by thinking.

Suppose a frightened horse has escaped from his driver and is running toward a little child at play in the street. Several persons see the impending accident. One of these, with vivid imagination, but not directing his mental actions at all, pictures to himself all the horrors that may happen and is paralyzed by fear. Another thinks only of himself and his own peril and stands still or removes himself beyond all possible danger. Yet another throws his arms about, gesticulating wildly, perhaps screams. All he does arises from his own mental distraction and adds to the confusion and consternation already in progress. Had another of those present been so absorbed in other affairs that he did not see the runaway horse, he would not have been disturbed by it, nor would he have taken any action in relation to it. Another, seeing exactly the same that the others see, is actuated by an entirely different line of thinking. "Quick as thought," he estimates the distance and speed of the horse, his own possible speed and his distance from the child, decides there is a chance for successful action, springs to the rescue, and snatches the child from danger.

In the illustration we have (1) the external suggestive incident of the runaway horse, (2) the

thinking of each person, and (3) his consequent bodily action.

Although the action in each case was connected with the same incident, yet it took its essential character from the thinking and not from the incident. This is without exception. Between the incident or suggestion and the action is always thinking. Without this thinking there could not be any action. Neither the incident nor any suggestion decides what the action shall be. The thinking does that. This is true of all bodily actions whether great or small, important or trivial, observed or unobserved.

In the case under consideration the actions of the persons who were present varied because their thinking varied; the initial difference was in their thinking. Each saw the same thing that the others saw, and if the incident had been the governing and directing power, each would have done the same things that the others did. Had a multitude been present, there would have been as many kinds of action as there were kinds of thinking.

Let two persons, walking in a pasture, come unexpectedly upon a group of cattle feeding. One of these persons has followed a course of thinking which has made him a lover of animals, and

he is pleased, interested, and views them with delighted attention. The thinking of the other has been habitually turned in the opposite direction. His thoughts about them have been those of fear, and now these recur to his mind, and he is filled with alarm. The actions of the two persons are as different as their thinking. One approaches the cattle with pleasure; the other flies from them in terror. He does not understand that his sense of danger is all because of his own thinking, but believes it is because of the cattle. If the cattle had been the real cause, the other person would have been as fearful as he was. In the same way we attribute the cause of our own faults to others when it is really within ourselves.

An extreme illustration, but one which has occurred in actual life and which shows the extent to which the power of thought has been carried, is furnished by the inhabitants of India. The man-eating tiger is an object of the greatest terror to the majority of them, and they go to his jungle only in large numbers and with every kind of weapon at their command. On the other hand, the man, whose thinking relative to the tiger is of a contrary sort, goes into the jungle alone without

any weapons and stays there unharmed. If those men who so fear the tiger would practise this man's course of thinking, they, too, would be in the same condition as he is and would be able to do the things which he does. A change of men's thinking would revolutionize the attitude of the race toward animals, and of animals toward the race.

Herein is the reason why some people do with impunity what would be impossible for others to do, or what they would be greatly injured by doing. The difference is popularly attributed to temperament, physical conditions, constitutional characteristics, or some other personal peculiarity. It is really due to states of mind — to thinking — the thinking which each habitually does whether noticed or unnoticed; this is often the result of education or habit, and the right habit can be created by continuous right thinking.

It does not need any further discussion to show that our feelings and emotions are not caused, as we ordinarily think, by something external to ourselves; they are caused by our own mental condition. If our thinking had been different, all our succeeding actions would have been different also. This has been recognized by the wise ones

here and there all down the stream of time. Shakespeare says: —

> "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

— not in things outside of us, whether near or remote, but in our own thinking, therefore in ourselves. More than seven hundred years ago good old St. Bernard said: "Nothing can work me damage except myself; the harm that I sustain I carry about with me and am a real sufferer but by my own fault." In the principles here set forth are both the confirmation and the explanation of his statement. The fault is solely in the thinking. We may change our thinking and thus change both our course and our conditions.

The cause of danger from our emotions lies within ourselves; it is useless to try to run away from it because we carry it with us as we run. The recluse carries within his own mind the cause of his difficulties, and this is why monasticism has always been a failure and always will be. It is not the temptation but the man's own thought in connection with it that ruins him. In every instance it is not the external incident but the man's own thinking which directs, controls, and decides what his course shall be.

IX

THE RULE

For the purposes of further discussion all thinking may be divided into two classes, harmonious and discordant.

"Each brings forth after its kind." This is the substance of a declaration contained in one of the oldest writings in the world, and is only another form for the philosophic proposition that the cause always exists in its consequence, which is exemplified as a fact wherever life and action have been observed. Then the character of the cause must determine the character of its consequence, and consequences must correspond to causes. Since thinking is the initial of all human action and is causative in its character, therefore right or harmonious thinking must produce right or harmonious conditions, and erroneous, evil, or discordant thinking must produce erroneous, evil, or discordant conditions. Consequently, control of the thinking is of the very first importance because it is control

of causes, and control of causes is control of the consequences which are to result from those causes.

The farmer plants corn, and corn springs up and grows. The young of animals are of their own kind. Even in the doctrine of evolution, which might seem to furnish something different if not contrary, the same principle prevails, for evolutionists tell us that activity produces changes and conditions corresponding to its own character. Exercise of strength in the arm produces more strength in the arm; exercise of skill in the fingers results in more skill in the fingers, and so on through the whole list. Mental training produces mental ability of the same kind as the training. Inactivity results in atrophy, while a new form of activity is held not only to develop increased activity of the organ used but even a new organ.

This principle has long been recognized in a limited way, as seen in the old adage, "Laugh and grow fat," and in Shakespeare's "lean and hungry Cassius." With the same import he says: —

> "To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
> Is the next way to draw new mischief on;"

but the conditions are even more positive, direct, and immediate than these statements indicate.

In a very general way it is recognized that grief,

fear, and anger shorten life, and that sometimes, when extreme in their intensity, they kill instantly; while contentment, peace, and satisfaction produce beneficial effects and tend directly and strongly to prolong life. Anxiety, doubt, and despair paralyze. Bitterness, greed, lust, jealousy, envy, and the like cause men to commit all kinds of wrongful and criminal acts, including even murder itself.

Such thoughts stamp their baleful impress on form and feature, and when habitual or constant they leave their permanent disfigurement. "Even a *momentary* thought of anger, anxiety, avarice, lust, fear, or hate distorts the features, impairs respiration, retards or quickens the circulation of the blood, and alters its chemical composition."[1] These results, the same in kind as the thinking that produces them, are too widely known and appreciated to need elaboration or comment. Good produces good; evil produces evil; and this always, without exception.

It is unfortunate that, until recently, the larger tendency has been to study the evil thoughts and their results more than the good ones; but the general proposition will not be disputed that good thoughts produce results the opposite of those pro-

[1] Tyner, *The Living Christ*, p. 194.

duced by the evil thoughts. "Love worketh no ill," is a truism in the negative form that no one is disposed to dispute, whatever one might be inclined to say of the same proposition in the affirmative form: "Love worketh only good." Similar things may be said of all good or harmonious thoughts.

It is true that sometimes a result which is not good appears to have been caused by good thoughts. Especially is it so with good intentions. In all such cases, if the causes are accurately analyzed, it will be found that the evil came from some unobserved ill which was connected with the good. Thus, ignorance often results in erroneous judgment concerning the character of the object sought or the means employed.

As to the effects of erroneous thought on the body, we have the authoritative utterances of acknowledged scientific observers. President Hall says: "The hair and beard grow slower, it has been proved by experiment, when a business man has been subjected to several months of anxiety. To be happy is essential. To be alive, and well, and contented is the end of life, the highest science and the purest religion."

Professor Gates made some very interesting experiments in this direction. He provided a spring

regulated to maintain an even degree of resistance, and so arranged as to register the number of times it had been pressed down. A man was required to make depressions of this spring with his finger until, from exhaustion, the finger refused to act. This was repeated until Gates was able to determine the average number of depressions which the man could make under ordinary circumstances before exhaustion occurred. Then, at different times afterward, he was asked to think about some subject which would cause discordant thoughts, such as the saddest thing that ever happened to him, or the man he most hated, and on one occasion he was asked to read Dickens's story of the death of Little Nell. After much thinking on such a topic, so that his mind was filled with the thoughts which it suggested, he was required to depress the spring. The average number of depressions possible under such mental conditions was very much less than he had previously made when his mind was in its usual condition. On the contrary, harmonious thoughts, as of love, peace, or anything good, raised the number of depressions above the average in a similar large proportion. A great number of experiments persistently showed similar results.

All this seems very wonderful because of the

manner in which it is presented, but it is of the same character as indicated by the ordinary experience and observation of every one. There are multitudes of similar incidents in everyday life. Who has not noticed that far less physical or mental weariness or exhaustion follows an evening thoroughly enjoyed, no matter how hard at work one may be, than follows the same length of time if engaged in some enforced or disagreeable occupation? In one case the thinking is harmonious, and in the other it is discordant.

In direct connection with this idea Professor James says: "I suspect that neither the nature nor the amount of our work is accountable for the frequency and severity of our break-downs, but that their cause lies rather in those absurd feelings of hurry and having no time, in that breathlessness and tension, that anxiety of feature and that solicitude for results, that lack of inner harmony and ease, in short, by which with us the work is so apt to be accomplished." [1] The break-down does not come so much from the work as from the discordant thoughts attending it. Uncertainty, anxiety, worry, fear, break a man down, but he can endure an enormous amount of labor if, instead of these

[1] *Talks to Teachers*, p. 214.

thoughts, his mind is filled with calmness, assurance, courage, and confidence.

By an examination of its effects upon the system Professor Gates undertook to discover the character of those substances which he obtained by condensation of the breath of his subjects. The brownish precipitate from the breath of angry persons when administered to either men or animals caused stimulation and excitement of the nerves. Another substance produced by another kind of discordant thinking, when injected into the veins of a guinea-pig or a hen, killed it outright. He gives his conclusions on this point with definiteness and precision: "Every emotion of a false and disagreeable nature produces a poison in the blood and cell tissues." He sums up his results in the statement: "My experiments show that irascible, malevolent, and depressing emotions generate in the system injurious compounds, some of which are extremely poisonous; also that agreeable, happy emotions generate chemical compounds of nutritious value, which stimulate the cells to manufacture energy." [1]

Only one specific case from ordinary life will be cited. It is chosen from a host of others because it is extreme as well as typical, and because its

[1] *The Art of Mind Building*, p. 4.

authenticity cannot be questioned. Many similar incidents are recorded in medical books.

The mother was strong, healthy, vigorous, muscularly well developed, and not especially sensitive, nor nervously organized, but rather the contrary. Her young babe was in perfect health. Something occurred which threw the mother into a fit of violent anger. Shortly afterward her infant was hungry, and she gave it her breast. The little one was soon after attacked with spasms and died in convulsions within a few hours. It is acknowledged by the highest authority that this was the direct result of the mother's anger. It does not need Professor Gates's experiments to show that she had poisoned her child. The mental state of anger produced an active poison which found its way to the mother's milk and killed the babe. Incidents of a similar kind pointing to the same conclusion, though differing in degree as the mental states varied, have long been matters of observation by medical authorities.[1]

[1] At the Vermont State Agricultural Experimental Farm, similar conditions are shown to prevail among animals. The milk of a certain cow showed four hundred and eighty points with little variation for several successive days. The cow's udder was scratched with a pin, at which she was irritated and more or less frightened. In all other ways she was treated as nearly as possible just as she

If discordant thoughts bring about such discordant results, harmonious thoughts must produce harmonious results of corresponding intensity. Instances will be found in profusion if sought for. The only difficulty attending the search arises from the fact that people are usually trained to conceal their emotions by restraint of the outward expression.

All this is not so very new as it may at first appear. We read in *The Wisdom of Solomon:* "By what things a man sinneth, by these he is punished," showing that at least a fragment of this thought was recognized by one of the old sages three thousand years ago. Not far from the same time, perhaps earlier, — the dates are uncertain, — one of the wise old Buddhists of India said: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of him who draws the cart."

Although this is very strong language, yet it is so reasonable that it should not create surprise. That

had been on the preceding days. At the next milking her milk showed only four hundred points, a falling off of over seventeen per cent. Men should be kind to the animals under their care for economical reasons, if for no others; but what about the healthful quality of milk produced under disturbing conditions?

the consequence partakes of the nature of its cause is a principle appearing in all experience. In each case the physical conditions are of the same kind as the mental states which caused them. Discordant thinking debilitates and poisons the system; harmonious thinking strengthens and nourishes it.

On the moral plane the situation is even more obvious because that deals with actions which were intended. A man may be angry with his neighbor and hate him. This is a mental condition; or, as McCosh would say, an emotion caused by a mental act. Its result is apparent to every observer in his treatment of the neighbor. His mental attitude toward another person may be just the reverse of this, and it results in another and a distinctly different kind of conduct. The mental condition of a person may make him covet strongly the property of some one else, and his judgment (which is the result of mental action) being unbalanced, he steals; while another man, with well-balanced judgment, and therefore thinking another kind of thoughts, obtains the article he desires by honest means. These contrary courses of action can only result from two kinds of thinking; and they are just as apparent in the highest actions in the moral scale as in the lowest.

After all has been said that can be, the whole may be summed up very briefly. Although they may follow one another very rapidly, yet two thoughts of opposite character cannot occupy the mind at the same time. Each kind of thinking produces results of exactly its own character. If one kind is excluded, the other will present itself. If a person would avoid discordant, physical, mental, or moral conditions, let him empty his mind of all discordant thoughts which create such conditions, fill it with harmonious ones, and cultivate them. Thinking is causative; if the discordant cause is excluded from the mind, its evil consequences will not be produced. The rule for conduct necessitated by these propositions is most obvious and simple: —

CEASE THINKING DISCORDANT THOUGHTS.

This rule is an expression of the principle of renunciation, a principle as old as the race; but it strikes at the root of all human actions instead of dealing with the topmost branches and leaves, as rules generally do; and it also avoids all possible interference of one person with another. Renunciation of evil, as expressed in numberless forms of "Thou shalt not," has been taught in one way or

another from the earliest times. The method of avoidance has always held a prominent place in ethical and moral teaching. The two contrary aphorisms, "Avoid the wrong" and "Do the right," are bound together by a principle too strong to be broken. Either includes the other, so that at last the two are only one, both in theory and in practice. The morality of avoidance of wrong and practice of right is so axiomatic that it instantly forces itself upon the conscience of every one who would become better himself, or who would aid others to become better. Compliance with this rule, which goes down into the deeps of man's nature and deals with the primal causes of all human actions, will easily and thoroughly accomplish all desirable results.

X

DISCORDANT THOUGHTS

THE rule set forth in the last chapter is vital, for it strikes at the very root of all evil. How then may its requirements be complied with? The first step toward this object is to decide what thoughts are discordant.

The wonderful subtlety of these thoughts often hides their true character so that many persons who entertain them are not aware of their real nature. Some pay so little attention to the subject that discord continually rules their minds. Besides, large classes of thoughts which are discordant are popularly held to be admirable and therefore are carefully cultivated, and those who do not harbor them are censured. This does not change results. All such errors inevitably lead to greater confusion. The list of discordant thoughts is long, and if one sets about the work of their exclusion, he will be led into a recognition and understanding of their character and quality that will far surpass any verbal

explanation which it is possible to make; yet definitions are of advantage, especially in the beginning.

Of course anger, hate, greed, lust, envy, jealousy, and all malevolent thoughts are at once recognized as discordant. To these must be added grief and its attendants, regret and disappointment; fear, doubt, and uncertainty, with their sense of responsibility, anxiety, worry, and despair; and condemnation of all kinds, including self-condemnation, with its self-consciousness, self-abasement, shame, and remorse.

All sinful or erroneous thoughts are discordant in their nature, and all discordant thoughts are erroneous, though, in the correct meaning of the word, not all discordant thoughts are sinful.

One error seriously influencing our decisions regarding the character of our thinking arises from the fact that, by many, a lesser degree of discordant thinking is held to be different in character from its more extreme manifestation. The character of a mental condition does not change with any change in its intensity. An act remains the same in its character and in the character of its consequences regardless of ignorance, misunderstanding, or any erroneous opinion about it or connected with it. Thinking which is held to be reprehensible if intense has the

same character in its milder forms and also when mingled with thinking of another kind, even though we deceive ourselves into the opinion that it is praiseworthy in the lesser degree or when in combination with other thinking.

We might as well say that if a weight does not reach a given amount, it is something else besides weight, or that it does not have any effect, as to say that the milder degree of discordant thinking has changed it to something other than what it was when more intense, and, therefore, that it does no harm. A ton is a ton, and a pound is a pound, and both are the same in kind; each acts in the same way in its due proportion. If fifty pounds would break down a support, twenty-five would seriously weaken it, and ten or even one would proportionately reduce its power of resistance.

Mental conditions are just as uniform in their character and action. Anger of any degree, or in any of its forms, is always anger however much it may be lauded, and even when provoked by something which may be thought to make it justifiable. In exact proportion to its intensity it always brings evil to the one who indulges in it. One thought never becomes united with another thought to their metamorphosis as hydrogen and oxygen disappear

into water in their chemical union. Thoughts do not have any such relation to each other.

Everyone is aware that extreme emotion sometimes kills, that when it is indulged in to excess, it incapacitates for any kind of effort, while in lesser degree it may pass by without notice. If extreme mental states produce disastrous results, milder conditions must, in their proportion, produce milder results of similar character. Though the disadvantage may be small, still it works its proportion of harm, and the energy expended in overcoming its injurious effects might have been stored up for future use or employed in productive activities.

The mental condition of doubt is seldom recognized as discordant, but is often held to be commendable or at least excusable, as well as unavoidable. While it has phases that are only mildly discordant, yet its uncertainty leads unavoidably to indecision of action; and, when this is coupled with that sense of responsibility which arises out of the anticipation of possible unfavorable consequences, there follows much discordant thinking in the form of anxiety and worry. These are products of doubt and would not appear except for its presence in the mind. The two, doubt and responsibility, are the parents of anxiety, fret, worry, and a large group of other

discordant mental conditions. Whenever discord appears, the cause which produced it must be discordant.

Anxiety, though often considered justifiable, necessary, or even advantageous, and therefore commendable, is a discordant mental condition. In its milder forms, at least, it is seldom held to be objectionable; but when the weight of responsibility rests heavily and anxiety appears in its intensity, its true character is clearly manifested in mental conditions that are unequivocal in their inharmonious peculiarities. Anxiety in its extreme manifestation puts an effectual stop to all progress. When under a keen realization of responsibility, who has not hesitated to undertake a good deed, or, having undertaken it, has not been greatly hindered by the anxiety which attended its execution? These and all their train spring from doubt and fear, and find their legitimate result in worry and its disasters, culminating in moral cowardice and despair.

Many people are prevented from doing what they know to be wise because they fear the result, and often because they are afraid that they will fear in the course of the transaction or at the approach of its crisis. There may not be anything but their own fear to be afraid of; yet they are aware that

fear incapacitates, and the fear that they will fear prevents any action. "I can't, because I *know* I shall be afraid," is a frequent expression of a controlling thought, and they who indulge it stand paralyzed by the fear of their own fear; but this which they have themselves created they may themselves destroy.

One of the worst errors concerning fear is found in the thought, old as historic man, that under certain circumstances it is wise to fear. It is easily understood how the old writer, who thought God was a tyrant ruling in anger and desiring vengeance, could readily believe that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." No doubt that writer really meant what we mean when we use the same word; but he was wofully wrong in his conception of God's character. His declaration and the ideas which caused it were widely prevalent not so very long ago, and have aided immensely in leading hosts of mankind into false opinions and their consequent erroneous actions.

There is a similar error in all those forms and actions of government which rest on fear for their motive and efficiency. It is not possible for any one, either child or man, to do his best nor to be his best when under the dominion of fear; and yet not

only parents, but both Church and State, have held that fear is salutary and have acted on that proposition. Untold millions of lives have been dwarfed and perverted, and laudable plans without number have been thwarted or abandoned because of needless fear.

Hurry needs no definition. It arises from the recognition that a certain object must be accomplished, or a certain amount of work must be done, in a given time. If the time is sufficient, there is no feeling of haste. If the time seems insufficient, there follows a recognition of the necessity for haste, and the result is hurry. This grows out of the doubt which creates the fear that the work may not be accomplished in the required time. Hence, it is clear that the root of hurry is doubt or fear. The verbal expression of the idea takes some form of the declaration: "I am afraid I cannot finish in time," which is the natural language of haste and reveals its discordant character. Its essential exists in the thoughts which constitute its root, and which result in the peculiar sensations which always accompany it.

Abandonment of hurry does not involve the loss of anything desirable; instead it results in important advantages. Every one recognizes the truth of

the old saw: "The more haste, the less speed." The mental condition which is produced by the feeling of hurry is always an impediment to celerity of action, often causes inaccuracy, and sometimes results in destruction. In and of itself alone, therefore, hurry, like all other kinds of discordant thinking, is a disadvantage in just the degree of its indulgence. Then abandon that mental condition and use the effort thus saved to increase efficiency.

Grief in many of its forms is thought to be admirable. Especially is this the case if it is caused by the death of friends. It is then looked upon as an expression of kindliness of heart and as a token of respect and love for the one who has gone. These qualities are indeed admirable, but they are entirely distinct from grief, although grief has been mistakenly praised for them, solely because its close association with them has led to confusion of judgment. Not to grieve for the loss of friends is condemned as hardness of heart; sorrow for wrong doing is held to be right and laudable; yet we know that extreme grief often paralyzes and sometimes kills, and that not infrequently sorrow for wrong actions is so intense and absorbing as to unfit its victim for activity in any right direction. Who does not know among his acquaintances those who

have so grieved over business losses that they were unable to procure the needed support for the ones dependent upon them? Who has not known grief for the loss of a child to render the parent, for a time at least, incapable of discharging the ordinary duties of life? Many cases of grief have resulted in insanity. It is true that these are results of excessive grief; but all grief has the same characteristics, and such extreme instances only emphasize its injurious character. Gates shows by his experiments that even mild grief unfits for vigorous activities, a fact often noted by every observer.

To praise the milder forms of grief and condemn its excessive indulgence, or to praise it when it has one cause and condemn it when it has another, is self-contradictory. If the extreme degrees are injurious, the lesser ones are proportionately so. If one is to be avoided, so should the others be. Grief or regret, by itself alone, is never an advantage. It never rights a wrong, nor removes an obstacle, nor heals a wound. Shakespeare was correct when he wrote: "None can cure their harms by wailing them." Wailing only adds to them and makes them worse.

All selfishness is not only discordant in its character, but it is morally wrong; and, though the

statement may seem harsh, yet, when accurately analyzed, grief in every one of its forms and degrees, even grief because of the loss of friends by death, is largely if not wholly selfish. If questioned, the mourner will himself admit that it is not the change which has come to the beloved one which causes his sorrow. It is his own loss which lies at the foundation of his grief; and that is selfishness.

If there is any truth in the declarations of Christian religion, every shade of grief for those who have gone before is in direct contradiction to professions of love for the departed. If Christians half believed what they say they do, they would recognize that in death there is not the slightest occasion for grief, but rather for rejoicing because of the change which has come to the one who has gone.

Despair in its extreme manifestation is at once recognized as discordant; its milder forms are also discordant though they may come to the surface under many and praiseworthy names. Even much-lauded patience may be only that form of despair in which one submits to the inevitable. So also is resignation; and often Christian resignation, so-called, is only despairing acquiescence in what are wrongly thought to be decrees of Divine Providence.

There is a variety of despair, often indulged in by

many, which is not ordinarily classed as discordant, but which is, nevertheless, extremely dangerous. It finds utterance in the declaration, "I can't." This is an expression of complete hopelessness and voices a discordant thought that will paralyze the strongest; will destroy the best, wisest, and most fixed intentions; will put an end to the best-laid plans, and will terminate the most energetic actions. It injures everywhere and will bring disaster to anything it touches.

The thought, "I can't," makes the difference between success and failure. The dull boy in school is the one who, without making an effort, thinks and says "I can't." The bright boy is the one who thinks and says "I can." In the beginning there may have been very little other difference, only one gave up easily and the other not at all; the life of one becomes a failure, of the other a brilliant success.

The only place where "I can't" has any value is when used as a refusal to think or do wrong; even then it is erroneous in form and does not express the appropriate idea. The correct and more vigorous form under such circumstances would be, "I will not"; for a person may be abundantly able to do what he positively refuses to do.

"I can't" tends toward the cessation of all action

— that is death. "I can" tends toward activity and gives power — that is life. Since we would avoid the worst of evils, we should cease even to think "I can't." If we would maintain life, we should continue to think "I can." The man who never recognizes defeat finally succeeds. It was said that the great secret of General Grant's success was that he never acknowledged, even to himself, that he was beaten. The man who thinks he has failed soon does so, and he who thinks he is a failure speedily becomes one.

A man was bedridden. His physician said that he had no disease, and that there was no reason why he should not go about his business. The physician was correct; the man was a victim of his own thought. One day smoke came pouring into his room. It was only a ruse of his doctor, but the man thought the house was on fire. Thinking so, to him it was a reality. He forgot his inability; the "I can't" thought was excluded from his mind by another which for the moment was more intense, and, in consequence, he got up, dressed, and rushed out. "I can't," and not anything else, had held him in bondage.

Banish even the suspicion of the discordant and destructive thoughts of hopelessness, defeat, or

despair. Do that everywhere, especially in the prosecution of the mental training here advocated. Whatever the object, let its consideration be always without a thought of discouragement, even when examining its difficulties most carefully. Scrutinize all obstacles for the purpose of finding how to overcome them. If the project is worth the effort, there is a way to accomplish it. That way will be found if it is sought with a confidence which excludes all doubt.

Patience is highly lauded and not unduly so when contrasted with impatience; but the two are closely related. If its own special characteristics are examined, patience will be seen to occupy a paradoxical position. When one excludes all of that discordant thinking which is called impatience, he will not have any occasion for the exercise of patience; that is, when impatience is wholly put out of mind, patience also disappears. Therein is its subtlety and deceit, for patience has no possibility of existence without some of those discordant thoughts which attend impatience; and in the cultivation of patience one unsuspectingly allows and cultivates more or less impatience at the very time when he flatters himself that he has abandoned it. Hence, there is something better than patience, and that is the condition which

exists in the mind after the entire exclusion of all impatience. Until this can be attained patience is desirable just as a lesser degree of evil is not so bad as a greater. Patience may be a good intermediate stage in one's progress, but it is unwise to "cultivate patience" as a final virtue because it is only harboring a mild degree of error, which sometimes verges close on despair.

Self-condemnation, with its allied lines of thinking, has been highly commended as a proper recognition of one's own faults and mistakes. It is continually taught both by precept and example from infancy to old age. The little child is asked if he is not ashamed of himself for an act which he did not know was wrong; the man of business teaches the inexperienced boy to blame himself for the mistakes of ignorance; the moralist says one ought to condemn himself for his wrong doing; the Church universally advises sorrow and regret for sins, and the deeper the penitence, or the greater the condemnation of self, the more laudable it is thought to be; and so on through the whole list of ethical and moral teachers of every grade.

Self-condemnation is a woful waste of energy which should be directed toward repair of the injury done and avoidance of similar conditions in the

future. This does not in the slightest degree imply less sensitiveness of conscience, less keenness of judgment, nor less clearness of sight to perceive the right and the wrong of things, nor less eagerness to do the right and avoid the wrong; on the contrary, its absence gives place for more of these very qualities and saves waste of vigor in both intellect and muscle.

Self-condemnation at its best is discordant; and the various forms of regret, grief over failures, self-distrust which produces doubt and hesitation about proposed or future actions, fear of not succeeding, inefficiency, and repression, are among the many serious and widespread evils resulting from it. Whatever their cause, they right no wrongs, repair no errors, set no bones, restore no life, change no act that is past, and do no good in any way. Their whole progeny is unworthy of any brave, true man. The energy thus employed is worse than wasted because it is used in work that is destructive, occupying valuable time and absorbing valuable strength which might otherwise be used in repairing damages and recovering lost ground. A man need neither repeat his sins, his mistakes, nor his failures, nor need he condemn himself for them.

If self-condemnation prevails in any considerable degree, there will result such lack of confidence in one's own ability as to thrust him out of his proper sphere of activity into a lower one and to deprive him of efficiency and executive ability everywhere else as well as in this work of securing mental control. Such thoughts tend in every way to the degradation and even to the complete destruction of the thinker. Innumerable untimely graves are filled with victims of self-blame and its products, — disgrace, shame, remorse, and despair, — and yet self-condemnation has been held up as worthy of all praise by educated, intelligent, and moral people who would have known better if they had understood its true character.

That the boy does not "cry over spilled milk" does not indicate indifference to the loss of the milk; crying would only hinder him in his efforts to procure more. That a person does not waste time in vain condemnation of himself and his past actions, which were probably performed in good faith and with the best judgment possible on the information possessed at the time they were begun, does not indicate lack of understanding, nor want of discrimination, nor a disposition to repeat the error. That one does not sit in sackcloth and ashes for the crime or sin he

has committed is no proof that his determination to abandon his evil course is not sincere.

Our great teacher, Jesus, the Christ, does not advise discordant thinking of any kind. He points out errors, wrongs, and sins, and holds them up to view in their true light, never in the slightest abating their enormity. He tells us not to repeat such things; but, so far as we have the record, he does not anywhere nor under any circumstances advise any one to condemn himself or to regret anything he has done, or to grieve over it. He speaks of repentance and conversion, and in religious circles much stress is rightfully laid upon these; but, unfortunately, these English words as at present understood do not correctly represent the meaning of the Greek words for which they stand in the New Testament.

The Greek word *metanoeo*, which is translated "repent," is thus defined by the lexicographers: "to perceive afterwards, to change one's mind or purpose, to change one's opinion, to have another mind." This does not in the least indicate or require regret, self-condemnation, or any other discordant thinking. Jesus' exhortation was always to change the mind for the better, never to spend time wailing over the past, and it is entirely presumable that the connection of discordant thinking with the true meaning of the

word arose from the fact that very often such a "change of mind" has been accompanied by thoughts of grief, regret, and self-condemnation; but the word itself does not convey such a meaning, any more than do the phrases which are used to define it. When the word was addressed to one who was in the wrong, it set forth in strictly scientific terms the easiest, simplest, and best method of making a change in conduct from wrong to right, for it simply means "change your mind" — no more, no less.

Likewise the Greek word *epistrepho*, which is translated "convert," contains within itself no meaning indicating any discordant thinking whatever. It is defined "to turn, to turn one's self, to turn about, to turn around," etc., and is used figuratively, as we say, "turn from the error of your ways"; or as Peter said in his speech to the people which is reported in Acts iii. 19: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Change your minds and thereby be turned about" exactly expresses the full meaning and brings the two words into such proximity that their mutual relationship clearly appears. This turning about is the natural and inevitable result of the change of mind indicated by the true meaning of the word

"repent." Both repentance and conversion will be better understood, and their object better accomplished, if the thought about them is limited to the rightful meaning of the words, and the judgment is not warped by self-condemnation, grief, fear, remorse, or any other discordant thinking.

XI

HOW TO CONTROL THINKING

SAID an old Hindu sage who lived so long ago that his name has been forgotten: "Let the wise man without fail restrain his mind." His counsel would have been better if he had said: "Let the wise man without fail *control* his mind;" and perhaps that is what he meant, for his real meaning may have been lost in erroneous translation. Ever since his time, and probably for a long while before, there have been men who recognized with more or less distinctness and earnestness the advisability of mental control. To be able to abandon those varieties of discordant and injurious thinking described in the preceding chapter would constitute a very desirable element of mental control and one which would lead directly to most admirable results through complete self-control. The question then becomes, how may we rid ourselves of discordant thinking?

The answer is very simple. Stop thinking discordant thoughts. Turn from one subject and give

attention to another; change the thinking from one thing to another; drop out of the mind those discordant thoughts which occupy it and think other and harmonious thoughts.

Every one who observes his own mental actions and methods is aware of countless changes of thinking following one another in rapid succession in response to external suggestions or requirements. The frequency of these occurrences will surprise all those who have not turned their attention in this direction. They will also discover that, under all ordinary circumstances, these changes are made without the slightest appreciable effort. All this is normal, occurring in the usual course of mental action. It is also ideal. It is toward such natural and ideal action as this that all intentional efforts to avoid discordant thinking should be directed. To make similar changes intentionally every time the discordant thoughts appear, thus dropping them out of the mind and giving the attention wholly to harmonious thoughts, is to comply with the rule in every particular and accomplish every desirable result.

The only unusual mental action involved in this course is that the impulse to the action is to come from within instead of from without. The change

should be made purposely, promptly, because of one's own choice, and in response to recognized principle; but not in heedless compliance with the suggestions of external circumstances or conditions. If apprehension of either effort or difficulty arises in the mind when proposing to abandon discordant thinking, it should be instantly excluded because it will inevitably lead to some form of the very kind of thinking which is to be avoided. This course of training depends on choice, must be in response to choice, and should be accompanied by the least possible expenditure of will or effort.

So much is said about exercise of the will that the term has become enveloped in a cloud of words, its true meaning has become obscured to the ordinary mind, and its very existence is questioned by some of the best-trained intellects. However that may be, preceding what is usually recognized as the will, or the determination to do, is choice which is without conscious effort, while exercise of the will is always accompanied by effort, sometimes severe. It all finally resolves itself into a question of action in response to choice, because choice lies at the foundation of all these actions, however necessary exercise of will may sometimes seem to be.

The requirement is merely to drop the discordant thought — to let go of it as one lets go of a stone in the hand — and this surely necessitates less exertion than to hold on. This act of dropping the discordant thought ought to be, and may be, nothing more than the abandonment of effort in response to choice, and it should not require any exercise of energy in "enforcing the behest of the will," for there ought not to be any of the strenuousness of "will" about it.

Control of the thinking is one of the primary actions of the mind and, like all such actions, can no more be described than one can tell another how to see or how to move. It is possible to say, "Look there," or, "Hand me the book," but it is impossible to instruct another how to see with the eye or how to move the hand. The three mental actions which are essential to this mental training are how to think, how to stop thinking any particular thought which may be in the mind, and how to change the thinking from one thought to another. Although there cannot be any direct explanation of these primary actions, yet, through experience, every one knows somewhat of how to accomplish them and does not need any instruction beyond the suggestion to begin.

The method is most clearly and definitely set forth by Strong when he says: "Suppose that, while thinking, I come within sight of some painful memory or inconvenient thought, and turn deliberately away, saying, 'No, I must not think of that;' surely, by so doing I cause the cessation of the corresponding brain-event as effectually as if I went at the cortex with a knife. It is as easy to turn the attention away from an idea as to turn the eyes away from an object. Nay more, it is as easy to turn the attention away from a sensation. To make a visual sensation lapse from consciousness, it is not necessary to look away, but only to think away." [1]

Apropos of this subject, Edward Carpenter says: "If a pebble in our boot torments us, we expel it. We take off the boot and shake it out. And once the matter is fairly understood it is just as easy to expel an intruding and obnoxious thought from the mind. About this there ought to be no mistake, no two opinions. The thing is obvious, clear, and unmistakable. It should be as easy to expel an obnoxious thought from your mind as it is to shake a stone out of your shoe; and till a man can do that, it is just nonsense to talk about his ascendency over nature, and all the rest of it. He is a mere slave and a prey

[1] *Why the Mind has a Body*, p. 95.

to the bat-winged phantoms that flit through the corridors of his own brain."

President McCosh says: "Though a man may not be able to command his sensibilities directly, he has complete power over them indirectly. He can guide and control, if not the feeling itself, at least the idea, which is the channel in which it flows. . . . He may be able to banish the unholy idea by calling in a more elevating one; he may remove the object out of the way or remove out of the way of the object, and the flame left without its feeder will die out. A man can thus control his feelings; he is responsible for them, for their perversion, for their excess, and defect."

He who is really in earnest and perseveres in the practice, doing his best to stop his discordant thinking in ways which his own intelligence and experience will suggest, will learn the whole lesson. There is no secret about it, nor any copyright, nor patent. By inheritance it is the right of every human being, and every one who is in earnest will find the way to claim his inheritance and control his thinking. In practical mechanics, however much the boy may have heard or read, he does not know much about his work until he uses the tools, and by using them learns certain things that cannot be verbally com-

municated; so here, in the practice of these things, one may learn for himself vastly more than can be told in words. The earnest practitioner in mental as well as in physical training will gain an understanding and a power which will enable him to do what seemed impossible at the outset.

XII

SUBSTITUTION

PURPOSELY putting out one thought and occupying the mind with another may be called the method of substitution. Exclusion of discordant thoughts furnishes opportunity for harmonious ones to take their place. If the purpose is intense enough, the new thought will never have to be sought for, because ceasing to think one thought uncovers another which at once presents itself in the place of the one which was discarded.

Decisive action at this point in the process is especially important. On the instant and without hesitation, seize the first thought which appears and hold it tenaciously. When the dangerous intruder has been dislodged, the positive, unwavering acceptance of the new thought will close the door and lock it behind the ejected intruder. To occupy the mind in looking about for some specially appropriate thought will cause such indecision and vacillation as will give the one excluded abundant opportunity

to return. Do not stop at first to question the character of the newcomer. That can be decided later when the mental control is more assured, and then if another more desirable thought presents itself, it may be accepted in its turn.

The mind must be active. The room which was once filled with erroneous and discordant thoughts, but which has been swept clean of them, must immediately be filled with desirable ones so that there may be no place for the return of the former objectionable occupants. "We should have our principles ready for use on every occasion" is as true now as when Epictetus first declared it. Good thoughts will then be ready to appear as soon as they are given the opportunity by the turning out of bad ones. Of course it is at all times and in every way advantageous intentionally and consciously to bring good thoughts into the mind and keep them there; then evil ones will not have an opportunity to enter.

In the prosecution of this mental training employment of any kind is a decided advantage because it keeps the mind occupied with a better kind of thinking than might otherwise fill it. Herein lies one of the greatest benefits connected with labor. The labor should not be such as results in great physical fatigue, nor should it require such special attention

as to produce mental exhaustion. It should be neither excessive nor insufficient, but adapted mentally and physically to the condition of the person who is employed in it. If excessive, there is danger of mental reaction through fatigue; if insufficient, there is danger that the unoccupied mind may take up some objectionable topic. Mental activity and the character of that activity are the essentials; the labor is valuable only as an aid to control mental action.

Herein, also, lies the advantage connected with travel and change of scene. Under these circumstances nearly every one submits himself to the suggestions of his new surroundings and allows his mind to follow them without any effort at control. Removal from the old familiar environment into scenes of an entirely different character gives new suggestions which substitute new lines of thinking in place of the former habitual ones, and these changed mental conditions bring fresh stimulus to the physical system. It is change of thinking which causes the beneficial result, not change of air.

The idle and frivolous need the change that stimulates new thought more than those who are engaged in productive work, because their thinking is far more liable to be of an injurious character. This is the

secret of the physical degeneration which follows lives of luxury or idleness; the poison is in the character of their thinking.

Just at this place it may be well to note this self-evident fact: exclusion of discordant, erroneous, or immoral thinking gives just so much more time and opportunity for the harmonious, truthful, or moral thinking. From considerations of utility alone, this is very important; the questions of morality make it much more so.

A most excellent way to turn the thoughts from discordant channels into harmonious ones is to look habitually for the good, both in persons and in things. It is an accepted fact that nothing can exist which is wholly evil or entirely separated from good. There was never a person who did not have some good qualities or who did not do some good deeds; nor ever a thing, however much it might be out of place, that did not have somewhat of good in it or closely connected with it. Then the search for the good, if diligent and faithful, need never be in vain; and when found, it ought to be well and carefully treasured. With this habit fully established, error thoughts will seldom intrude. Steadfastly "Look for the good in thine enemy."

The fact that good and bad are often close to-

gether, and that there is never anything wholly bad, is well illustrated in the answer of the member of the kirk, who had been charged with saying good things of the devil — an unpardonable sin in the eyes of those valiant old Scotch Presbyterians of former days. Her answer and her defence was: "Ah weel, mon, 'twere vera gude for a' the members o' the kirk if they had his persistence."

The search for the good should be undertaken for its own sake alone, and not with any ulterior or secondary object in view. The one purpose should always be kept fully to the front. If this search for the good is prosecuted with the desire to secure through it some other advantage, that second object should be dropped out of the mind because its presence will tend strongly toward defeat. This is because the action of the mind will be divided by the pursuit of two objects and neither will receive its whole attention, consequently each will fall short of its rightful result. The hunter cannot aim his rifle at two different objects at the same time with any serious expectation of hitting either. To be double minded is to invite defeat.

The whole subject may be well illustrated by the case of the young lady who could not sleep because the noises of the city disturbed her. She was told

that every noise, whatever its character, had a musical note and was advised to try to find that note in each of the various sounds which she heard. In compliance with this advice she abandoned all attempts to go to sleep and pursued that one object with the result that she slept soundly all night. The explanation is that before she had dwelt strongly on the discordant characteristics of the noises which she heard, and, by her own thinking, had enlarged her consciousness of the discord as well as of her consequent sufferings, and thus she kept herself awake. In her search for the musical notes she lost sight of the disturbing discordant conditions, and she fell asleep because the discord no longer disturbed her. If, during her search for the musical notes and her contemplation of them, she had kept in her mind the thought that she was doing this for the purpose of inducing sleep, she would thus have kept herself wide awake because her mental action would have been divided between two objects, and she would have been constantly aware of the fear (discordant thought) that after all she might not secure the coveted sleep. Let the mind be single.

If so much can be accomplished in the purely physical way by singleness of purpose in the search for the good, surely equally conclusive results may

be gained in moral and spiritual directions; and by so much as these are more desirable will the consequences be more valuable.

Therefore this search for the good, which is one of the best methods by which harmonious thinking may be substituted for discordant, should not be limited to an attempt for the moment only. It should be a life work, constantly in exercise, and it should be pursued until complete success is at last attained in the exclusion of every discordant thought. Thus life will be made to shine brighter and brighter, not alone for the one who practises the lesson and learns it, but also for all his associates, until at last it shall irradiate the world. We do not, nor can we, live and make ourselves better for ourselves alone. This is a work for self which does not have any selfishness in it.

XIII

IMMEDIATE ACTION

THE discordant thought often appears very suddenly in response to external suggestion, and sometimes that fact is made an excuse for allowing it to pursue its course. The plea is, "It came before I knew it;" but this does not justify any one in allowing it to continue. One can think in one direction just as rapidly as in another, and, if he chooses to do so, he can stop the discordant thought as suddenly as it appeared — even on the very instant. The unexpected flash of anger can be cast out of the mind with the same instantaneousness that it started.

There is no difference in the rapidity of the different kinds of thinking. It takes no longer to think harmonious thoughts than discordant ones, and no longer to exclude the discordant thought than it did to admit it. If one is instantaneous, so may the other be. Though it takes a little time for the mind to send its orders along

the nerve to the muscle, still, in itself alone, thinking is very nearly if not quite instantaneous.

Of course, in all this there are those thoughts which immediately precede an act, and others which were antecedent and contributory to it. The series may be a long one, running far back into the past. Before a man murders another, there must have been in his own mind thoughts of greed, envy, anger, hate, desire for revenge, or others of evil character. According to some statements of modern science, these may have followed one another through generations of ancestors. The first one of the series is more easily controlled than any of its successors, and destruction of the first prevents the birth of any of the others. They are all evil and discordant, and, under the rule, each is to be abandoned as soon as it appears, even though none of them point to any immediate "overt act."

Indeed, the danger of the overt act does not constitute the greatest danger. That really lies in the first thought of the series. The woodsman can split the log if he can only make an entrance into the wood with the point of his wedge, and so it is with thinking. A person should not allow in his mind the smallest item of discordant thought,

because it is there that the danger lies. It is the point of the wedge, and safety lies in not admitting even that.

That wise old Chinese philosopher, Lao-tsze, said: "Contemplate a difficulty while it is easy. Manage a great thing while it is small." If the seed is destroyed, there will be neither the little shoot nor the rank weed to be uprooted and cast away. The trouble with many of us is that we do not understand, and we allow weeds to grow until they overrun the garden. Let there be neither hesitation nor delay. Discordant thinking gathers force and persistence with every moment it continues. Delay affords it an opportunity to intrench itself, and this only increases the difficulty. If one neglects the little fire, he cannot stop the big conflagration.

The boy coasting, if he sees danger ahead, may check his first movement with very little difficulty. Whether the start is abrupt and the descent steep, or more deliberate in the beginning and the descent more gradual, the stop should be made with decisive promptness the very instant that danger is perceived. Halfway down the declivity, when the velocity is great and the accumulated impetus is considerable, the stop cannot be made so easily.

The boy may put down the brakes, but there is danger of accident, and he must "play the game out" even though he may conclude it sooner because of his efforts. The better and easier way is not to start; or, having started, to stop at the first movement.

The discordant thought should be dropped out of the mind as quickly as a red-hot coal would be dropped out of the hand, and another and harmonious thought should be welcomed in its place with equal celerity. Prompt and decisive action here will save much future effort.

XIV

PERSISTENCE

EVERY least mental action has its result. By the law of the persistence of energy, nothing ever happens, however seemingly unimportant, without its effect on succeeding events. Astronomers say that the falling of a pebble moves the earth out of its course in exact proportion to the size of the pebble. Everything has its own value and importance. Then we ought to seek out the smallest manifestation of discordant thinking and stop it, because the slightest objectionable thought must have its result, and therefore it should never be allowed to run its course. It would be a serious mistake to suppose any thought too trivial to require attention.

The rule at Donnybrook Fair applies here: "*Wherever you see a head, hit it.*" The least is not too small to be terminated if it is wrong. The little error in its little beginnings ought to be taken care of as soon as it is perceived. Through

doing this, one becomes thoroughly prepared for complete mastery of the larger ones whenever they present themselves. Neglect of the little ones will create inability to cope with the greater. Indeed, if this rule is followed, the greater ones will never appear.

It is equally important that the change when once made should be steadfastly maintained. If the erroneous or discordant thought returns, it should again be instantly dismissed, and this should be repeated with every return, regardless of its frequency. To allow its continuance, even for the briefest moment, means greater difficulty in dealing with it. There should be no dallying or postponement. The old German proverb is exactly applicable in this place: "The street By-and-by leads to the house Never."

Professor James gives such a vivid illustration of the effect of failure to maintain constant control of the thinking when once it has been undertaken, and of the extremely slight suggestion which may divert one's mind into its former channel, that the paragraph is inserted here because of the instruction it contains for those who are striving after mental control. He says: —

"For example, I am reciting *Locksley Hall*

in order to divert my mind from a state of suspense that I am in concerning the will of a relative that is dead. The will still remains in the mental background as an extremely marginal and ultra-marginal portion of my field of consciousness; but the poem fairly keeps my attention from it, until I come to the line, 'I, the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time.' The words, 'I, the heir,' immediately make an electric connection with the marginal thought of the will; that, in turn, makes my heart beat with anticipation of my possible legacy, so that I throw down the book and pace the floor excitedly, with visions of my future fortune pouring through my mind." [1]

Emotions are simply states of feeling induced by mental conditions. Control of the thinking will always control the emotions. Men and women who do not exercise this control as they should, thereby allow their emotions to control them to their own destruction. If at the beginning they had controlled their thinking, they would have avoided the whole difficulty. Christison writes, italicizing his words: "In normal mind it can be controlled by the power of the will to exclude or substitute ideas as directed." [2] Every

[1] *Talks to Teachers*, p. 87. [2] *Brain in Relation to Mind*, p. 128

emotion becomes fully controllable by excluding from the mind the thoughts which produced it. This can always be done in the milder forms of thinking, and exercising this control of the milder forms will produce such a mental state that violent conditions will not occur.

Each person who attempts purposely to dismiss discordant thinking will have experiences peculiar to himself. Some thoughts will be more easily set aside than others; and this will vary with his own varying mental conditions. Many difficulties will arise because his thinking heretofore has been allowed to run on without direction and subject to any external suggestion which prompted it; others because he approaches the new course of action loaded down with the idea that it requires strenuous effort. Habits of long continuance are not destroyed with a single effort, and perfection of mental control is not attained at once. Many difficulties are sure to appear, but by perseverance they can be overcome. The work will be less difficult and the action more persistent if one realizes that the advantages to be gained vastly outvalue the efforts involved.

As a matter of practice it will be best to begin with that inharmonious thinking which seems

the least difficult to overcome. The wise general strives to divide the forces of his enemy and attack each detachment separately, the weakest one first. He thus defeats them more easily because his own strength is greater than that of the portion of the foe upon which all his efforts are concentrated. The athlete did not begin with great things but with the smaller ones, and in the practice of these he gained the strength and wisdom which enabled him to overcome the larger ones.

It is best to follow a similar method in mental training. Divide the enemy and attack the weaker outposts first. These overcome, the intrenched city will not then be so formidable. Lift the smaller weight which is suited to the strength, and the exercise will prepare one for the heavier objects. The highest mountain peak can be scaled only by first ascending the smaller elevations which buttress it.

When the thought that seems of minor importance has been cut off and cast aside, another can be undertaken, and then another. Facility will come with practice, and what was begun with difficulty will be ended with ease. Each succeeding task may be only a little more difficult

than the one already accomplished, and in each he will find advantages arising from his experiences with the former ones. Thus the work may go on from one erroneous thought to another until all discordant thoughts are thrust out.

Each morning let there be an intentional renewal of confidence for the dawning hours. Begin the day with hopeful consideration of the subject. Recount the incidents of yesterday and make an examination of the methods which were adopted to avoid failure and to secure success. This careful consideration of former successful efforts will enlarge the understanding, strengthen the confidence, and materially help to gain greater victories in the coming day. Rejoice mentally and be glad over each triumph. Be very glad. Gladness alone invigorates powerfully, as do all harmonious thoughts. Cultivate gladness. Depression disappears just in proportion as one cultivates gladness and serenity.

It is probable that in the prosecution of this work the beginner will meet with some surprises. Not only will unexpected difficulties present themselves, and that which he expected to dispose of easily prove very persistent, but he may even find himself enjoying and really desiring to continue

his indulgence in a line of discordant thinking which heretofore he has suspected to be more or less objectionable, and which, in his clearer understanding, he now knows to be so. In these experiences the careful observer of his own mental processes will gain much wisdom and many a stimulant which will aid him to persist in his efforts to achieve complete success.

Perhaps the greatest danger may arise from discouragement. Under the stimulus of the first enthusiasm all will probably go well, and there will be many successes which will seem wonderful and which may encourage the beginner to think that the work is nearly completed. Possibly the thought may occur that the necessity for so much vigilance has passed, and this may cause a little relaxation of attention and consequent carelessness; or there may be a sense of effort and weariness. These are seductions to beware of, because they are quite liable to be succeeded by slips which are more or less serious and difficult to overcome, and disappointment and discouragement are almost sure to follow.

This is an important place in the course of mental training, for a little hesitation and a little slipping back into the old habits which are so seduc-

tive may be fatal to the purpose and cause the abandonment of further effort. At the least it will entail the necessity for greater effort than has been before put forth in order to recover lost ground. As in the case of the habitual drinker who is trying to reform, little lapses, if allowed, are almost sure to lead to more important ones, and it will require more strenuous efforts to overcome them than were requisite at the start. The danger to the drinker is in his first dram, and in this training the serious danger is in allowing the little discordant thought, so small as to seem of no consequence whatever, to continue unchecked; but however great the task, steady persistence and perseverance are sure to succeed at last.

XV

NOT ALWAYS EASY

It is not claimed that it always appears to be easy to change the thinking in response to one's own choice without reference to external suggestions, or, as must often be the case, in direct opposition to them; nor will one acquire in a day the power to do this every time and on the instant. An established habit of any kind is not broken by a few feeble attempts; but persistent, faithful, determined effort will overcome the most dominant habit that ever fastened itself on a human being.

The single condition necessary to success in this mental training is that one should be enough in earnest to persist in the repetition of the effort every time the excluded thought reappears. The ability to do this is in itself alone extremely valuable even if there were no other consideration. Professor James well says, and none too strongly: "The faculty of bringing back the wavering attention over and over again is the very root of judg-

ment, character, and will. No one is *compos sui* if he have it not. An education which should improve this faculty would be the education *par excellence.*" The ability to do this is at the basis of success in securing control of the thinking, and also at the basis of every success in life. The method of doing it, as we have seen, is the very perfection of simplicity and of effectiveness as well, and James is correct when he says that this is preëminently the best education. It ought to be made the basis of all education, for what is learned early in life is learned easily. It is, however, abundantly worth the effort no matter how difficult it may be.

One item of great importance in connection with it is the fact that for its prosecution and attainment one does not require salaried teachers, nor ponderous books, nor any outlay beyond the expenditure of one's own effort; nor does it require any change of living, nor absence from home, nor from any occupation. It can be prosecuted anywhere, under any circumstances, and in connection with any other employment. One may be his own instructor; indeed he must be, for another cannot instruct him in this. He must himself select and learn his own lessons, find out

and correct his own mistakes, and, indeed, do fo himself all that a teacher would do for him in another branch of training; but perseverance, persistence, and the determination to succeed will surely overcome all difficulties and bring success. Any one can do it. The whole process consists simply in ceasing to do what ought not to be done, and in repeating that process whenever necessary.

The fact that a person can sometimes successfully control his thinking proves that he may do it every time that he really so desires. What a man has once done he can do again. This fact is of the utmost importance here, because it indicates beyond question that complete success is attainable in spite of all difficulties. He has only to banish the discordant thought each time it returns.[1]

The one who is in earnest and persistently pursues this object should not weary in it. Incidents of more or less importance will present themselves from time to time through the whole course, which will show the amount of progress that has been made and the value of what has already been attained. They will also show what is yet to be

1 "'I am only telling you,' said the Tinker, 'what you could do if you tried. Kittles ain't so hard to mend if you keep on.'"

done and how to do it. It will be strange if occasions do not arise when the temptation to despair will be almost overwhelming, and success will seem almost impossible; but despair is one of the worst of discordant thoughts and must be dismissed instantly, regardless of its source or provocation. There may also be incidents which seem like failures, but they may all be overcome and turned into successes. Let it be kept steadily in mind that "difficulties are only things to be overcome." The old Chinese proverb says: "Remain careful to the end as in the beginning, and you will not fail in your enterprise."

The only possible course is to persevere through everything. There is no field of action wherein greater or more valuable results can be achieved with a given amount of effort. The way is straight and narrow, but the prize at the end is as great as man ever struggled for. Paul says of one who is seeking better things: "Let him not be weary in well doing, for in due season he shall reap if he faint not." And we need never forget, for it is forever true, that —

"We always may be what we might have been."

XVI

EFFECT OF THE PHYSICAL ATTITUDE

THE character of the outward physical expression is of much importance. For instance, the influence of the grief thought upon the body is such as not alone to cause the tears to flow, but also to give its own peculiar expression to the face, to the gestures, and even to the attitude of the whole body. So, likewise with the opposite emotions of happiness, joy, or serenity, each produces in the body its own characteristic expression. In all cases the body follows the mind, and then the mind is influenced by its recognition of the bodily conditions caused by its own previous action.[1]

[1] I have seen a person thrown into feverish conditions by his own mental actions, and then frightened when he recognized the physical conditions which his own mind had caused. The fright was the result of his perception of the fever, was caused by that perception and would not have occurred without it. If, when he perceived the fever, he had also recognized its cause, there would not have been any fear. Hence, though we speak of the influence of the body upon the mind, that influence arises from and is caused by mental action, namely, the mind's perception of the condition of the body.

This bodily action upon the mind, through its recognition of physical conditions, is so strong that if the bodily attitude natural to any mental mood is purposely assumed, that physical attitude will so act upon the mind as to induce those mental conditions which would normally produce the assumed bodily expression. This influence of the body upon the mind through the mind's own action may be used for the control and improvement of mental conditions.

The normal bodily expression for cheerfulness is an erect spinal column, the head well poised, and a general slightly upward direction of the eyes. This very position which cheerfulness would naturally give to the body will itself, if purposely assumed and maintained, produce cheerfulness. In fact, the mental effect resulting from this attitude is such that it is impossible for a person to continue it for half an hour in walking or any other physical activity and remain mentally depressed.

One who is seeking to banish discordant thinking should assume that bodily attitude or expression which the desired harmonious thinking would naturally produce. Let him smile whether he feels like smiling or not. Even a forced smile

will assist toward banishing the mental discord. "Assume a virtue if you have it not." Force a smile that a spontaneous one may follow. It will help toward the introduction of harmonious thinking, and if this is fostered by the right mental effort, the two will work together for immediate success. But let it be a smile and not a grin; at least let it have as much of smile and as little of grin as possible. No one can force a smile without producing somewhat of the smiling thought, just as no one can assume the attitude of cheerfulness without somewhat of cheerfulness arising in the mind. In this lies a large part of the reason why the bodily attitude or expression is so efficacious in bringing into realization the desired mental condition. Behind the clouds which obscure the vision the sun is always shining, and one need not abide in the shadow except by his own choice.

The actor, whether in public or private life, can achieve full success only by producing within himself the mental conditions he would represent; and in like manner he who would win in mental control will find a most powerful assistant toward the production of the desired mental condition by assuming the physical attitude or expression which represents the thought that he desires.

Professor James, in his *Talks to Teachers*, has a very strong paragraph on this subject: "Thus, the sovereign voluntary path of cheerfulness, if our spontaneous cheerfulness be lost, is to sit up cheerfully, to look round cheerfully, and to act and speak as if cheerfulness were already there. If such conduct does not make you soon feel cheerful, nothing else on that occasion can. So, to feel brave, act as if you *were* brave, use all your will to that end, and a courage-fit will very likely replace the fit of fear. Again, in order to feel kindly toward a person to whom we have been inimical, the only way is more or less deliberately to say genial things. One hearty laugh together will bring enemies into closer communion of heart than hours spent on both sides in inward wrestling with the mental demon of uncharitable feeling. To wrestle with a bad feeling only pins our attention to it, and keeps it still potent in the mind; whereas, if we act from some better feeling, the old bad feeling soon folds its tent like an Arab and silently steals away."[1]

[1] James is right in what he says about "wrestling," and the reader will note that the dominant idea of this book is not to wrestle with wrong thinking, but to drop it and, having thus put it out of the mind, let it alone forever.

This is not hypocrisy. It is not done to deceive, as hypocrisy is. It is done for the purpose of banishing wrong thinking — it does it — and that is praiseworthy.

XVII

ALL ONE'S OWN WORK

THIS work of excluding discordant thinking from the mind does not involve any attempt to proselyte or to interfere with others in any way. It does not directly concern any one but the person who is engaged in the work for himself, and it certainly does not deal with any one else; neither ought another to interfere unless asked, because such interference would not only be an impertinence but a hindrance. Walt Whitman stated the case clearly and concisely when he wrote:—

> "No one can acquire for another — not one.
> No one can grow for another — not one."

This is true because one cannot either see, hear, or think for another, but each must do these things for himself. Because one's thinking is entirely his own and cannot by any possibility be another's, whatever is involved in thinking with all its contingencies and consequences is necessarily one's

own and depends exclusively upon one's own efforts; but the exclusion of discordant thoughts and the ushering in of harmonious ones is the business of thinking solely, and therefore it belongs to one's own self and cannot be delegated to another. The actual cleansing of the temple must be one's own work.

Other things depend more or less on the action of some one else to hinder or to help, but a man's thoughts need not depend in the least upon what another does, or says, or thinks. A man's mind is a domain where, unless he consents, no one but himself can enter, and he need not allow another to have the slightest control over it. His thinking is his own and never another's, and another's need never be his unless he chooses to accept it; therefore the responsibility is all his own also, but the compensation for that lies in the fact that his action may be unimpeded and uninfluenced — free.

The law, in the person of an officer, can take charge of one's body and transport it from place to place or lock it up in prison, can dispose of a man's property as it sees fit, and may compel him to do many things which he himself does not wish to do; but unless he allows it, no human power

can enter his mind to interfere with his thinking. A man's thoughts are his own until he gives them utterance, and in the world of his own mind each man may reign supreme. It is the divine right of every human being to think as he pleases.[1]

More important than the old poet imagined was the truth he uttered when he said: "My mind to me a kingdom is," and he would have added to the accuracy and power of the expression if he had said: "My mind to me *my* kingdom is." A man's mind is indeed his own kingdom, and he ought never to allow it to become the kingdom of another wherein he himself is a subject. If a man has trained his thinking, he may declare more truly than the lone Selkirk:—

> "I am monarch of all I survey,
> My right there is none to dispute."

All this is most favorable to the prosecution of mental training, because it places the whole work of development in one's own hands, unimpeded

[1] Holding to this principle, but forgetting that a divine right relates to divine things, it has been widely held that a man has the right to think what he pleases, provided his thoughts have no outward expression in word or deed; but the conclusion is irresistible that a man has no more right to think wrong thoughts than he has to do wrong deeds. Immoral thinking should be held in abeyance as inflexibly as immoral action, for it is the root of all immorality.

and uninfluenced by others. A modern writer has truly said, though with a note of sadness which does not belong to it, that "in all its deepest experiences the soul is solitary. Every crucial choice must be solitary." Though this mental solitariness is a necessity, it does not cause a man to hold aloof from others, nor does it prohibit one single valuable social pleasure or advantage; but it is a boon, and a glory as well, and it may bring a consciousness of power, dominion, and freedom that cannot come from any other source. He, who has trained his mind to obey his own behests and has asserted and realized his rightful mental supremacy over himself, can better enjoy contact with his fellows and can reap greater advantage from association with them. Over him there cannot be any domination by others, whatever their course, and he will enjoy a freedom that nothing but mental control can give.

Here at last is ideal freedom, which, when coupled with recognition of the self-control which is inseparable from it, gives man a sense of ability to be and to do such as nothing else can. The greatest strength lies in the vivid realization of this fact when one really awakes to its existence. He can himself, as he chooses, thrust aside impediments

within himself without interfering with another, and with no one to interfere with his action or to ask why. This ability is not to be spasmodically expressed, but is always to be steadily maintained. In nothing else does man need to be alone, but here he stands entirely alone and yet without any sense of loneliness; indeed, this very aloneness may become one of his greatest blessings, for, having banished discordant thoughts, here one may, as Emerson directs, "stay at home in his heaven." The results for good may reach out into the vast unknown of humanity in unexpected and undreamed-of ways which were never planned.

XVIII

DESTRUCTION OF DISCORDANT THOUGHTS

THE advantage and efficiency of the course here advocated rest in large part upon the important fact, perhaps not often noted, that those things a person is not thinking about are, to him, at the time, as though they did not exist. Thus, through forgetfulness, an object or an idea passes entirely out of consciousness, and, to the thinker, during the time of forgetfulness, it is as though it had never existed. It can be brought back by recollection, when the thinker will once more have it in mind; that is, by the mental action it will again become to him a reality.

The mere sight of a thing is not what gives it reality, for to the sight of it must be added consciousness of that sight. This consciousness is itself a form of thinking which must take place before the thing becomes a reality to the one who sees it; therefore before it enters into consciousness

and after it passes out of consciousness it does not exist to the thinker.

We laugh at the person who becomes so absorbed in some special thought as to be wholly unaware of everything else. To him, at the time, the one thing he is thinking about is all there is in existence. On the other hand, he may be thinking so intently as to make a thing real to him even in its absence. A man was accustomed to shave himself every morning before a mirror which had hung for a long time in one particular place. The mirror was removed, but for several days he went as usual to the same place and shaved himself without accident, just as he had done when the mirror was there; but one morning his attention was called to the absence of the mirror, and he cut himself when he thus was made aware that he no longer had its assistance. To those who are specially intent on one particular thing, the only thing that exists is the one they are thinking about, and that is existent to them whether it is to others or not. The only difference between such a man and the ordinary person lies solely in the fact that he is recalled to consciousness of existent conditions with more difficulty than others are.

Every one has sometimes been so engrossed as

to be wholly unaware of things going on around him; but this only indicates intense mental attention in one direction to the entire exclusion of all else. Many a person has become so absorbed in a game of cards as to lose all consciousness of pain, and some have indulged in the game that they might make themselves oblivious to both physical and mental suffering. This is a form of forgetfulness; the thought is no longer in the mind, and, having passed out of the mind, it no longer creates discord nor generates injurious chemical substances in the body. When this is made permanent it is called healing; and the person who has trained himself so that he has complete control over his mind can make it permanent without the excitement of a game of cards.

Things are real to the thinker because they are in his mind, and it makes no difference to him how unreal they may be if he believes them to be real. This is illustrated by all those who labor under hallucinations. Non-existent things are real to such persons, and often they are so intently engaged in these unrealities and believe in them to such an extent as not to be aware of the realities which are pressing them.

But we do not need to go to the insane for ex-

amples. He who is fully persuaded that his friend is false, however untrue that may be, is in the same condition both mentally and physically as if it were true. The world is full of such incidents, and they have come within the observation of every one. It is thinking that makes the thing real, and in the absence of that thinking it does not exist.

Two things are to be noted in this connection. First, absence of the reality from the mind does not destroy that reality; it only makes it unreal to the one who is not thinking about it — makes it, *to him*, as unreal as though it did not exist. Second, presence of the unreality in the mind does not make it a reality. It is real only *to the thinker;* but, being real to him, its effects on him are the same as though it were indeed a reality. It is a well-known fact that a man who thought he was bleeding to death died from the thought, though he had not lost a drop of blood; and there are thousands of similar unnoted and unrecorded instances.

The practice of substituting one thought for another is admirable and is not to be abandoned until something better can be done, but destruction of the discordant thought would be a far more

effectual method. The exclusion of a thought from the mind is, for the thinker, its destruction while it is excluded; and its continuous exclusion, so that it should never return, would be its complete destruction for him. This is the supreme result of constant practice in the exclusion of erroneous or discordant thoughts. If it is an erroneous thought, or a thought of error, the error is thus for him literally and completely destroyed. If the whole world would thus exclude the erroneous thought, it would no longer have any existence.

The correctness of this statement is more readily perceived in those cases which concern an erroneous belief in the existence of something which is easily recognizable as non-existent, such as the supposed falsity of a friend who is not false. While that falsity is a fact to the one who thoroughly believes it, still its destruction is complete the instant the thought is dropped out of mind, and if the thought is dropped forever, then the destruction is forever. The same thing is true of the fear of an impending disaster which will never occur. Such fear can be so completely dismissed from the mind that it is utterly destroyed. It is the same with all erroneous thoughts.

The two methods of substitution and destruction

work together; substitution sustaining and assisting the work, and, if persisted in, finally resulting in total obliteration of the objectionable thoughts. Some one has truly said that more than nine-tenths of the ills of life are occasioned by anxiety (thinking) about events that never happen. Neither the things nor the anxiety exist except in thought. Then if that thought is put out of mind, or destroyed, those ills disappear forever. They are destroyed.[1]

Though it is only a thought that is destroyed, yet in that thought exists a cause; and let it not be forgotten that every discordant thought is the cause of discordant mental and bodily conditions, and the cause being destroyed, the consequences do not appear, so that literally the destruction of discordant or erroneous thinking is the destruction of the possibility of wrong conditions. The man who quits lying can do nothing else but tell the truth; so, too,

[1] The saddest fact in the world is sin, however it may be accounted for. But here is a method whereby it may be destroyed, and this is the method of Jesus, the Christ. (See last chapter.) He would have us put all error (and that includes all sin) out of the mind completely. To do this is the essential of forgiveness, because to forgive means to put away; and when we have put away from ourselves (by putting them out of mind) our own errors and the errors of others, they will not any longer exist to trouble us. When every one does this, there will no longer be any sin.

he who destroys the discordant thoughts cannot do otherwise than think harmonious ones, and the destruction of all discordant thoughts would leave in existence only those which are harmonious. This would result in the production of none but harmonious actions and the establishment of harmonious conditions without any discordant ones to interfere. This is the grand ultimate object. It can be attained through mental control, and thus men may rid themselves of more of the ills of life and gain more of its advantages than one who has not tried it would believe possible.

XIX

SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

WHILE avoiding Scylla the ancient Grecian mariner had to beware lest he wreck on Charybdis. In the attempt to avoid certain discordant thoughts one must beware lest he fall into indulgence in others of similar character which may arise in connection with the effort.

It will be strange if disturbing thoughts do not sometimes present themselves, but mental disquiet of any kind must not for any reason be allowed in any part of the process. That discouragement which comes from occasional or even frequent failure must be dismissed as promptly as were the first discordant thoughts; neither must it be recognized as failure, but only as an incident in a process which will terminate in success. Thus will be established more securely and easily the habit which probably was more than half formed when the discouragement arose.

Along with the sense of disappointment and regret

at temporary or incidental failure, and suggested by it, is quite likely to come self-condemnation, and this may be followed by grief, anxiety, discouragement, and even despair. They never assist in the least; they always hinder. It is not necessary to blame one's self in order to correct an error which has been made. No man is helped to be better by grieving over the things he has done. Getting rid of one evil is no advantage if another quite as bad is allowed to arise in its place.

Ruskin states one side of the case correctly, clearly, and strongly when he says: "Do not think of your faults; still less of others' faults; in every person that comes near you look for what is good and strong; honor that, rejoice in it; and, as you can, try to imitate it, and your faults will drop off like dead leaves when their time comes."

A sense of the responsibility or of the burden of the work should not be allowed in connection with the attempt to exclude discordant thinking, nor should there be any vestige of a thought of anxiety lest the ejected thought return to create another state of mental disquiet. If these are allowed, the second state of that man will be worse than the first, because he will be weighed down by two kinds of erroneous thinking instead of one. Even though

he may have successfully banished one set of thoughts of which he wished to rid himself, he will find that he has enslaved himself to another group as bad as the first. To allow such thoughts to spring up alongside the attempt to weed out others is not to clear the field of discordant thinking, but to change from one set of intruders to another; or, worse than that, to introduce another set, and this is the exact reverse of the object aimed at. No one thought of the discordant class should be admitted any more than another, and there is no more reason or justification for harboring one than another; still less is there any reason for allowing two. So far as any one of them is allowed it defeats mental control and its advantages just as effectually as would the continuance of the original erroneous thoughts.

In the beginning of this mental training strenuous effort may seem unavoidable, but with persistent practice better mental conditions will be established, so that in most cases the change of thinking may be accomplished without appreciable effort. From the very first the thought that there may be any necessity for such effort should be banished as far as possible, because it induces more or less dread of the undertaking and doubt of its success. Consciousness of effort detracts from the ideal of the perfect action,

and complete success is not reached until the change of thought can be made without it.

The desired object may be accomplished thoroughly by entering into that perfect mental freedom which arises from such exclusive devotion to the work of the moment as to shut out all other considerations, and to leave all the time and strength for the business in hand. Indeed, this work when rightly done is done so quickly in each succeeding experience that there is neither time nor opportunity for any other disturbing mental conditions than those to which the effort was first directed. All this may be accomplished without any diminution of activity or energy; instead there will be an increase of effectiveness in all right directions.

XX

MORAL DISCRIMINATION

To stop thinking discordant thoughts does not necessitate change of former conclusions as to the kind, character, quality, or conditions of any subject under consideration; these should remain undisturbed unless sufficient reasons appear for making a change. A man may refrain from striking the person he hates without changing his opinion of that man's character; and in like manner one may refrain from angry or otherwise discordant thinking without attempting to persuade himself that the other person is praiseworthy.

One is not in the least aided, but rather is he hindered, in his attempts toward harmonious thinking by calling black white, bad good, wrong right, or in any way trying to persuade himself into an incorrect opinion. Such a course would falsify and degrade one's standard of right, and that must necessarily always be a serious disadvantage. It is lying to himself, because even while he says an enemy is a

friend he knows he is not; and though all lying is wrong, if there is any difference at all, it is worse to lie to one's self than to any one else.

The search for the good in everything should not be degraded into an attempt to see everything as good or to think that bad is good. Such a course would confuse the judgment as to what is good and what is not good. There is already too much of that. All ideas on these subjects should be kept as clear, positive, and distinct as possible; and the line of demarcation between the two should always remain undisturbed. Good is good and bad is bad whatever may be said or thought about them. If the bad presents itself, it should be recognized, understood, and known in its true character so as to be avoided; but this may be done without discordant thinking of any kind whatever, and with the conscious certainty that the good is close at hand.

One can never afford to think that bad is good, nor that his own defect is desirable, nor that his misfortune is in itself an advantage; neither of them is ever a necessity, not even to teach lessons, because if one's understanding is sufficient, he may learn the lesson beforehand, and that will enable him to avoid the adverse circumstances. Every one should stop condemning the bad man, should stop being angry at

the ill turn his friend has done him, should stop his regret for the misfortune which overtook him, and stop self-condemnation because of his own defect — should, in fact, stop all discordant thinking about anything and everything — and he may do all this without any change of his opinion about the object, the person, or the affair. When this is done, he can look at any and all things justly and fairly, see them as they are, learn all that is to be learned about them, arrive at correct conclusions, decide what is right or advisable to do under the circumstances, and then act upon his decision.

The true character of every error or mistake which one may make should be correctly understood and properly appreciated; but this can be accomplished better and with more clearness, certainty, and accuracy without discordant thinking than with it. Avoidance of such thoughts does not imply avoidance of a correct understanding of the rightful value and character of the things with which one has come in contact. The instant which has passed, the mistake which has been made, the sin which has been committed — all these things should be divested of every gloss of circumstance and of every fictitious appearance, and then they should be studied carefully and exhaustively so that they may be correctly under-

stood as they really are, to the end that in the future they may be more easily avoided. This is reasonable and practical, and conduct is thus more wisely directed and becomes vastly more efficient.

There need not be any fear that those who persistently attempt to exclude discordant thinking will lose their recognition of the difference between right and wrong because of such exclusion. On the contrary, the mental training here proposed will bring a keener perception of those differences because the practice of discrimination between the erroneous and discordant on the one hand, and the true and harmonious on the other, is necessary to successful prosecution of the work. Indeed, no correct action can be taken under the rule without more or less of such discrimination; and, as a necessary result of the exercise of such discrimination, one must become possessed of an increased keenness and accuracy of discernment, and therefore of judgment, as to the true character of his thoughts and acts as well as a clearer insight into the moral qualities of his thinking. These desirable conditions will steadily increase as he progresses. He will come to understand clearly where before he doubted. Some things which before were accepted as right will be questioned until, finally, they will be better understood and

consequently rejected as wrong; and other things which were once thought to be wrong may later be found to be right. To one desiring to know what is right (and every one in his best moments does) this method will be most valuable.

In pursuing this course will be found an exemplification of Jesus' declaration: "Whosoever will do [chooses to do] His [God's] will, shall know of the doctrine [teaching]." The same thought changed into different words might read: Whosoever really and earnestly chooses to do right and perseveres in doing it shall learn how.

XXI

A LITTLE ANALYSIS AND ITS APPLICATION

PERHAPS more often than otherwise discordant thinking is provoked by some incident, condition, or thing external to one's self. The connection in the mind between thoughts and their causes is very close, but there are two kinds of these thoughts, — those which are simply thoughts about the occurrence without any quality of discord whatever, and those which are also thoughts about the occurrence but which are discordant in their character. These are entirely distinct, therefore dismissal of the discordant thoughts does not necessitate dismissal of all thought connected with an incident any more than throwing out the decayed fruit necessitates throwing out the perfect fruit also.

So complicated has become the ordinary life of to-day that very little of our thinking is simple. Analysis shows that all our thoughts are more or less complex, being made up by the union of a multitude

of elements, each with its distinct characteristics. These may run along together in seemingly inextricable union, yet they are distinct and do not in the slightest depend upon each other for existence. Such of these elements as are discordant may be wholly excluded from the mind without any interference with the others and without any loss of efficiency either in thinking or in acting, but with a decided advantage to both.

This does not mean that the objects, duties, and requirements from which discordant thoughts seem to spring are to be abandoned, nor that a person is to stop thinking about them; it only means that one should eliminate the discordant thoughts which may arise in connection with them. There is a wide difference between thinking about an object or occurrence in a harmonious manner, as one ought, and thinking discordantly, as one ought not.

These two kinds of thinking run so close alongside each other that in the prosecution of mental control it sometimes appears necessary to stop all thinking about the provoking cause. In earlier attempts this method is often the best and most successful. If all thinking about the subject is put out of mind for a little time, one will find that later he can enter upon a full consideration of it without introducing

any discordant mental conditions whatever, and the proper consideration of the subject can then be undertaken with a good prospect of arriving at correct results.

It is only after all such thoughts have been swept away that the mind is prepared for a keen, just, and fair examination of the situation; the whole field can then be clearly surveyed, and the best possible decision made concerning the conditions and the course to be pursued in connection with them.

A person's friend may have acted improperly toward him, and he may recognize that he is himself stirred by it to anger, regret, grief, or some other kind of discordant thinking. This should be dismissed without a moment's hesitation. Every one has experienced the physical sensations which succeed such thinking, and this dismissal should be so instantaneous and so complete that no "feeling" will follow the recognition of the incident. Mere mental attention to this discordant "feeling" disturbs the current of harmonious thinking even if there were nothing else to interfere.

When the discordant thoughts are completely excluded, one can make an accurate investigation of the incident. How did it happen? What was the cause? Who was to blame? Had he himself done

anything to provoke his friend to such a course? What is right and therefore best to do under the circumstances? These and many other questions will present themselves for decision, but not one of them should be allowed to provoke any mental discord, because, just in proportion to its intensity would that discord inevitably tend toward inaccuracy of thinking and consequent erroneous conclusions; but in its absence one may judge coolly and calmly and act wisely.

Avoidance of discordant thinking does not mean neglect of any duty nor shirking of any right undertaking. On the contrary, it means more vigorous and efficient activity in the discharge of every right duty or obligation and more complete and effective accomplishment of every right object. It means removal of a large class of serious mental and physical hindrances to activity and efficiency. It means avoidance of all the physical discords and discomforts which are brought upon one's self by the useless impediments produced by discordant thinking. It means dispensing with the useless and injurious in order that there may be more time and energy for the beneficial and valuable. To cease such thinking will leave mind and body clear, strong, able, and ready to do more and better work along all right lines.

We look upon the evils of to-day and are more or less disturbed by them, and the more closely they are related to us the more considerable is our discordant thinking and consequent discordant and injurious emotion. We look upon the evils of a past century and learn all the circumstances connected with them with only a mild wave of discord. As we walk we note the obstacle in the path, perhaps with regret, or anger, or condemnation of the man who placed it there, perhaps even with despair at our inability to pass it; or, we may so control ourselves that we do not have the slightest mental disquiet, and, because of the absence of that discord, we find our way past it all the more readily. We may so train our thinking that finally, by habit thoroughly established, we shall have no more discordant thoughts about any event than we have about those which happened thousands of years ago, or about those of the present time which do not in the slightest concern us.

One ought not to consider his mental training complete until he can, with entire equanimity, meet all incidents which affect him personally and can consider them carefully with entire freedom from any discordant thinking or feeling.

XXII

HABIT

THERE has long been a tendency among moralists to decry habit, perhaps because their attention has been directed more frequently toward bad habits than good ones, or they may have been more interested in destroying bad habits than in creating good ones. The popular idea of the preponderance of evil habits has also come, in part at least, from the undue magnitude which evil has been allowed to assume in the human mind, and from the consequent belief that habit turns more largely toward evil than toward good. This may be a relic of the "religious" idea formerly so carefully cultivated by a considerable class of teachers of morality, and therefore widely believed, that man is totally depraved and as "prone to do evil as the sparks to fly upward." Centuries ago Ovid wrote:—

> "Ill habits gather by unseen degrees,
> As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas."

This statement has the disadvantage of being negative in character, thereby suggesting those dis-

cordant thoughts which arise from doubts about successfully overcoming an increasing evil; but there is another and far more desirable view of this subject which has the great advantage of being correct as well as encouraging.

Habit is the result of the natural tendency of the mind to persist in doing those things which it has many times been set to do. A new action is often accomplished slowly and with difficulty, but repetition results in greater facility, and it may be continued until at last it is performed without conscious effort or attention and without the exercise of any volition beyond the choice to begin. This is the origin of a majority, some say of all those actions which are looked upon as reflex or automatic and which seem to occur independently of any mental action whatever; and in this way any action repeatedly performed may finally become reflex or automatic. This being the case, the door is open whereby a man can control not only his conscious thinking, but by the control and creation of habit may also create and control that thinking of which he is not conscious.

The action of the piano player is an excellent illustration of the way habit works for us. So is the incident of that musician who was stricken with

epilepsy in the midst of his orchestral performance, but who continued to play accurately to the end. He had established the habit by his own long-continued efforts. It takes the musician a long time to set up this habit, and he considers it well worth the effort; but the end sought in the control of discordant thinking is vastly more valuable than the musical accomplishment, however desirable that may be.

Habit works with absolute impartiality; for good with the same facility and effectiveness that it does for evil; for right thinking just as powerfully as for wrong thinking; and the increasing momentum and power of a good action repeated is just as great as that of a bad one. One may easily control the initial idea either to emphasize and repeat it or to avoid it. If a person persistently does that, the tendency, whatever it may be, whether inherited or otherwise acquired, and however firmly intrenched, can be modified or destroyed. By constant repetition the habit of avoiding discordant thinking may be established just as firmly as any other, and with no more effort, for habit, good or bad, is only action oft repeated.

If one refuses to allow discordant thoughts to continue, stopping them every time he is conscious of them, the habit will finally be so confirmed that

whenever the objectionable thought is presented, the mind will of itself automatically refuse to entertain it; and this, too, without any conscious attention from the person, just as the musician presses the keys of his instrument without the least recognition of the thinking which produces the motion. By habit the mind will persist in not doing whatever it has been trained not to do with the same readiness and ease which it manifests in doing the things it has been trained to do. Thus, this habit may be so cultivated that when any suggestions of discordant thinking arise they will "stop themselves." To establish any habit the action of the mind only needs to be given the right direction by continuous repetition, but it is all-important that the obtruding thought should be banished every time and on the instant that it appears. Man should understand this fact, be encouraged by it, and take advantage of it.

An immense proportion of our good actions are habitual, and that is as it should be. Professor James says: "The fact is that our virtues are habits as much as our vices." We should establish the habit of good, useful, and virtuous actions as soon as possible by setting up correct habits of thinking.

When Ovid's couplet is reversed it is as true as when it is read in the way he wrote it; and in its

modified form it has the advantages of being just as accurate as in its original form and also of giving vastly more encouragement to those who are striving to establish better mental conditions for themselves:

> "Good habits gather by unseen degrees,
> As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas."

XXIII

THE RELATION OF THINKING TO HEALTH

THE relation of thinking to every bodily action from the smallest to the greatest is that of cause to effect, therefore the same is true of the relation of thinking to health and disease. Harmonious thinking is the cause; health is the effect. Discordant thinking is the cause; disease is the effect. Each person has built as he would; each person may build as he will.

This becomes broadly apparent if the statement of President Hall be accepted, that there is no change of thought without a change of muscle. Still more clearly does this appear in Professor James's declaration that mental states always lead to changes in breathing, general muscular tension, circulation, and glandular or other visceral activity. These point directly to the statement by Professor Gates that anger, jealousy, hate, or any malevolent thinking causes the secretion in the system of various

injurious substances, including poisons. The circulation of the blood and all other bodily functions are interfered with by passion or emotion. Laughter and tears are physical conditions involving changes of muscles and of glandular secretions, and their causes are purely mental. The same is true in all bodily conditions.

But, objects one, I did not think of a headache, yet I woke with it in the morning. Very true. Neither did the thief think of stealing when he began to wish for his neighbor's property; nor did the mother, weeping over her lost son, think of shedding tears; nor did the man in a convulsive fit of laughter plan to laugh. Had there been no thought of the ludicrous, there would have been no laughter. Had there been no thought of grief in the mother's mind, there would have been no tears. Had there been no desire for what was another's, there would have been no stealing; and had there been no discordant thought, there would have been no headache.

Professor Gates's experiments show the direct influence of thinking upon the health. He found that anger produced a brownish substance which appeared in the breath. He continued his experiments until he had obtained enough of that substance so that he could give it to men and animals as medicine

is administered. In every case it produced nervous excitability or irritability. In his experiments with another kind of thinking he obtained another substance from the breath which he injected in the veins of a guinea-pig, and the pig died in a very few minutes. After saying that hate is accompanied by the greatest expenditure of vital energy, he enumerates several of its chemical products, all poisonous, and concludes by saying: "Enough would be eliminated in one hour of intense hate, by a man of average strength, to cause the death of perhaps fourscore persons, as these ptomaines are the deadliest poisons known to science."

He experimented with two young ladies. They were first tested in various ways to ascertain their general condition. One was then required to make a list of all the delightful, pleasant, enjoyable, or fortunate incidents in her life. The other made a list of all the events of a directly opposite kind in her life. He kept each thinking upon her own list as continuously as possible for thirty days, and then they were tested in the same manner as at the beginning. The first had gained most remarkably, while the second lost in nearly the same proportion.

All bodily actions and conditions, whether intended or not, are consequences of thinking, and

since disease is a bodily action or condition, the rule holds good for all diseases. Thoughts of grief, regret, anxiety, or fear which follow bad news often find their physical consequence in a disturbance of the nerves of the stomach; and, in exact proportion to the intensity of these thoughts, they bring about such a disordered condition of that organ as to impair or even suspend digestion. We say, "It struck to the stomach." This expression is figurative, but accurate; and nearly every one has had a similar experience. If we examine ourselves, we find that "it" was a thought or a group of thoughts. The disturbed condition of the stomach caused by "it" varies with the variation of the other attendant mental and physical conditions. The disordered stomach may affect the head, causing dizziness or headache, or it may disturb the optic nerve so as to cause dimness of vision, or it may act upon other portions of the body in discordant ways, causing debility, weakness, pain, or suffering of many kinds and of longer or shorter duration, according to the intensity, continuance, or frequency of the repetition of the discordant thinking.

It is not necessary, as has been asserted by many, that one should think of a special disease in order to produce it. On the contrary, disease is seldom

caused by direct thought of the particular disorder which afterward appears, although it may be so caused and sometimes is; but discordant thoughts of some kind set the train in motion. Sometimes the train is a long one, with many physical and mental actions and conditions existing between the initial thought and the disease in which the series culminates.

Although the incident which appears to be the immediate cause of the disease may be purely physical in character, yet that incident must itself have had its cause which, if sought, will at last be found in some mental action or condition. Too small or improperly shaped shoes may be worn until the feet become distorted, diseased, and painful, and this will change the whole attitude and action of the person. When the shoes were selected, this result was not thought of, least of all was it intended. It may be said that the cause of this suffering was purely physical, yet certain ideas regarding the size and appearance of the shoes governed their selection, and, causing that, caused all that followed, including the suffering. Thus, the origin of it all was thinking, even though remote from its consequences to the health. Sometimes diseases of maturity and old age may be clearly traced to some thinking of childhood

or youth which had long disappeared from the consciousness of the person.

History is full of illustrations of diseases directly caused by mental conditions, many of them noted in the records of the medical profession. Dr. John Hunter, the great English surgeon, suffered from disease of the heart which he himself ascribed to his fear of having contracted hydrophobia when dissecting the body of a patient; and it is said that his own death was the result of a fit of anger.

Although it is possible that in some instances there may be such a combination of known circumstances with known thinking as to show beyond question that a particular disease was the result of some special kind of thinking, yet it does not necessarily follow that this disease is always the result of this particular thinking, nor that this thinking always produces this particular disease. We do not know anything about the unnoticed or subconscious thinking and not very much about that which is undirected; that is, we do not know anything of the specific character of some of the causes, and of others very little, consequently our knowledge is too insufficient to enable us to draw special conclusions which shall necessarily be correct.

It may be beyond question that a certain headache

was caused by anger, but it does not necessarily follow that every headache has anger for its cause, nor even that anger causes headache in a majority of cases. There are more than a score of other mental conditions which might result in headache, and there is a large number of physical conditions besides headache which may be caused by anger. Hence, it is not possible to demonstrate that any given disease is always produced by some one particular kind of thinking.

This is illustrated by the fact that one man turns pale from anger while another flushes. In one of these cases the blood is sent away from the surface by the same mental action which in the other sends it to the surface. That the blood may take these opposite directions in two different persons under the impulse of the same kind of thinking indicates clearly the erroneousness of singling out any one particular set of discordant thoughts as the cause of any special infirmity. The attempt to banish certain thoughts for the purpose of securing immunity from a particular disease might be successful in eradicating the disease in one person, but it might not have that effect in another. The whole brood of discordant thoughts should be banished, and the eradication of any erroneous thought will be followed by good

results even if it does not terminate the particular disease in question.

To stop wrong or discordant thinking for the purpose of securing good health is not the highest motive. The moral considerations are the primal and most important reasons for doing it, but to do it for reasons of health is better than to continue the wrong thinking, and physical health is greatly to be desired. The destruction of all wrong thoughts would eradicate all disease as well as all erroneous actions, and would purify the whole man.

The principles under consideration clearly explain the cause of relapse, or the recurrence of a disease once cured. If the healing is followed by the requisite change in the mental habits of the person cured, that is, by the avoidance and eradication of the thinking which caused the disease, then it will not return. If there is no change in these habits, the thinking which produced the disease in the first place will produce it again. This explains why Jesus told persons whom he had healed to go and sin no more.[1] It also explains why he told his disciples both to heal

[1] The Greek word in this place translated "sin" might have been translated "err" with equal faithfulness to its meaning. This brings the subject into the broader and more general domain of error and also lightens the condemnation for those whom he addressed.

and to preach. Instruction (preaching) should accompany every case of healing so that the cause may be avoided in the future and then, of course, there will be no recurrence of the disease.

But some one asks about those diseases which were caused by physical excess; are they also results of thinking? The answer is that they are, either directly or indirectly, because every excess has for its cause, back of all else, some mental action or condition. This might have been changed in its beginning or in its course, and then the consequences would have been different. Delirium tremens follows excessive use of alcoholic stimulants. It may be claimed that drinking was the cause, and so it was; but the drinking was itself the result of thinking and would not have occurred had the man ceased thinking those thoughts which led to it.

The condition is not changed even if drunkenness is the consequence of heredity, or inherited tendencies. In that case the series of thoughts and circumstances is merely lengthened by removing the causative thinking farther away from the resultant disease. Those inherited tendencies were the results of ancestral thoughts and consequent actions. If the ancestor had avoided those thoughts he would not have bequeathed "the legacy of damnation" to

his children. Yet, even when such an inherited tendency exists, because thinking caused it rigid control of one's own thinking will destroy it. Such conditions may require greater effort than in most other cases, but sufficient effort is possible, and if it is continued steadily and firmly, the final triumph is certain.

The incipient causes of those physical conditions which are occasioned by accidents will always be found in thinking, or in lack of thinking, which is in the same domain. A man falls and breaks an arm because he is thinking of something else than his footsteps. The defective building falls and crushes the occupants because the builder was thinking of the greater gain he might make by less careful construction or by the use of defective or cheaper materials. The railroad wreck was the result of a misplaced switch, and this in turn was caused by lack of the attention of the switchman who thought the train had passed, or that it was not due. And so on through the entire chapter. When followed to their ultimates, however much accidents may at first appear to result from wholly physical causes, yet mind and its action will at last be found to have been their occasion in every instance. Even in a wider and deeper way than all this, the very possibility of

breaking the bone or crushing the limb may be the result of the habitual thought that the race has entertained from time immemorial.

The catalogue of the diseases of immorality is a very long one, and every day careful observers in the medical profession are adding other names not heretofore suspected of belonging in that list. Thinking is always the beginning of immorality, and therefore thinking is the ultimate cause of all those diseases occasioned by it. Immorality merely intervenes between the thinking and the disease. Immoral thoughts cannot be indulged in without producing their mental and physical consequences. They not only have their evil results in the disturbed or diseased physical system, but they write their record where it may be read by all men.

Those who recognize the causative character of thinking sometimes say that all sickness is the result of sin. While it is true that all sickness is the result of error, it is also true that not all error is sin. Error arises out of not knowing, and that is ignorance; but though ignorance may be reckoned as erroneous, it could hardly be classed as sinful. It is therefore cruel, and very often unjust, to charge those who are suffering from physical infirmity with being sinners. This is condemnation, and all condemnation is to be

avoided because it is discordant; but, more than that, in this place the condemnation may be misplaced and wholly undeserved. If the good man who is sick only knew that wrong thinking is as bad as wrong actions, he would stop his discordant thinking as effectually as he checked his erroneous actions. He may be ill because of ignorance and error, but not necessarily because of sin. Self-control, through control of the thinking, may be the healing of every conscientious person who has hitherto controlled his actions, but who has only repressed his thinking.

Herein may be seen the reason why so many persons are afflicted with disease even though their "daily walk and conduct" is above reproach. The good man who is always ailing may persistently keep his discordant thoughts in mind but conceal them. He knows he ought not to injure his neighbor, yet, because of his ideas about what is right, he may think it is his duty to condemn and despise him in his heart. By sheer force of will such men control the tongue, the hand, and all outward actions, but leave the cause which would otherwise produce those actions to prey unchecked and uncontrolled upon themselves.

Discordant thoughts when repressed, like the fire that is smothered but not extinguished, rankle within

all the more fiercely for their restraint, straining and torturing the nerves, preventing the normal and rightful glandular and visceral activity, ruining the muscles, sapping the strength of the bones, generating those harmful secretions which create every variety of disease and infirmity, burning the man with fevers, freezing him with chills, starving him with dyspepsia, and poisoning him with their injurious chemical products.

Repressed thoughts are all the time striving for expression or outlet in some form of physical activity; and, therefore, throughout their whole duration, there exists the necessity for the counter-effort in greater degree in order to keep the body in check. The energy necessary to maintain muscular control in the repression of discordant mental activity requires strenuous and wearying exercise of the will which increases the burden and is decidedly injurious to body, mind, and morals. None of this energy would have been required had the thoughts been dropped out of the mind as soon as they appeared. Therefore, though a good man may not show it to the world, yet all the time he may be ruining his health and happiness with his discordant thinking.

Probably, in addition to all the rest, the man who thus represses his thinking has, in most respects,

a high moral standard and a sensitive conscience which is outraged by the presence of such thoughts. This creates the keen mental discord of regret, self-condemnation, grief, and remorse to furnish additional, and equally discordant, and therefore equally injurious, mental elements which do their work as effectively as any others. Such thoughts may remain dormant and unnoticed in the mind for years, finally to flash out into expression at some unfortunate moment very much to his own surprise as well as to the surprise of his friends. Thus, difficulty is piled on top of difficulty until it is no wonder that such a man, though outwardly good, fails to possess healthful vigor and elasticity. The wonder is that he lives out half his days, but what might he not be if he would only drop discordant thinking!

XXIV

RECAPITULATION OF PRINCIPLES

In all human activities three occurrences follow one another in regular order: (1) the external incident; (2) the thinking which follows the incident; and (3) the bodily action which is caused by the thinking, is governed by it, and consequently takes its character from it.[1]

Then, since the bodily action is governed by the thinking, it is not governed by the circumstance which provoked that thinking; and since the character of all bodily action is established and controlled by the thinking exclusively, therefore it must be the same with those conditions known as health and disease. This conclusion being correct, then it follows that those bodily conditions which are looked upon as purely physical are always given their character by the thinking.

Take for illustration a blow on the finger. There

[1] The only exception to this order is in those cases where the action originates in the mind itself without any stimulus from an external occurrence.

are two avenues by which the blow comes into the mental consciousness. One is along the nerve of transmission through the hand, up the arm and neck into the brain. The other is by the more direct way of the light vibrations from the finger to the optic nerve in the eye and thence along that nerve to the brain. This last route is shorter than the other, and the larger part of the distance is by a method vastly more rapid than the nerves afford. Hence, the "message" arrives sooner by this route than by the first, so that one sees the blow before he feels it.

Between the perception of the blow by way of the line of sight and the perception by way of the nerve, there is an appreciable instant of time, ample in which to think, because thinking is practically instantaneous. According to the principles here set forth, this thinking decides the character of the action which shall follow the blow, and in point of fact such is the case. This has been experienced by all those who have made careful observations of their mental and physical actions under such circumstances. If the control of the mind is rightly and completely maintained, so that there is no discordant thinking preceding and during this instant, there will not be any pain. This has been

done repeatedly and may be done by any one who will control his thinking.

Similar experiences have occurred not only in connection with blows, but also with burns and other accidents. There have been numerous cases where boiling water has been poured over the hand or other part of the body without pain or other ill effects. Success in this has been so complete in many instances that not only was there no pain, but the blister and other usual physical results did not follow. This can always be accomplished whenever an interval of time exists between the two announcements of the incident, provided the person is on the alert and has trained himself in the control of his thinking.

These experiences are of the simplest character, and, because they are simple, the desirable results are more easily accomplished, but they demonstrate the accuracy of the general proposition because the simple conditions on which they rest are the same as those on which rest all bodily actions however complicated. From facility in these simpler things it is possible, as in any sphere of activity, to advance to equally successful management of the more complicated and difficult affairs.

The fact that harmonious thinking during the

interval controls and gives character to the bodily actions is a physical and practical demonstration of the principle, because if the thinking has been, as usual, discordant, the usual pain will follow.

The necessity for complete exclusion of every variety of discordant thinking is seen in the fact that it is not always enough to avoid the discordant thinking which is directly connected with the particular incident in hand. All discordant thinking whatever must be excluded at the time in order to gain complete success. One who was thoroughly trained in this practice was surprised at failure and unable to explain it until he remembered that discordant thinking, relating to an entirely different subject, had been in his mind at the time.

Herein lies the possibility of perfect health; it needs only that men shall follow the rule. With the entire disappearance of those thoughts which produce disease, disease itself must disappear, and perfect health must follow.

This proposition is contrary to what has been the trend of thought for centuries, and therefore many abandon the subject without giving it due consideration. Then again, to others the conditions seem so simple that they do not see how it is possible that such important results should follow such

simple causes; besides, perseverance is necessary to success, and few care to persevere. Exclusion of all discord is necessary, yet many think little things are not worthy the requisite attention and effort; and, for lack of that training which they might have had through the management of the little things, when they are confronted with the larger difficulties, they meet discouragement, if not failure. However, it still remains true that to attain to perfect health it is only necessary to stop thinking all discordant thoughts.

The impetuous restlessness of the American branch of the English race and the intensity of their activity are constantly spurring them on to "do something." That is one reason why they swallow such enormous quantities of drugs, even compelling their physicians to prescribe medicines when the physicians themselves are convinced that their patients would be better off without them. But here is a method of the opposite character. It does not require the doing of something, but the ceasing to do something — not activity, but rest. It is not to do, but to stop doing.

Lao-tsze told his countrymen a half-truth which points to a whole truth, even if couched in the negative form, when he said: "By non-action there is

nothing which may not be done." When right thinking is not interfered with by wrong thinking, the right acting will take care of itself. If a man ceases to think evil, he will cease to do evil, and right will prevail, because there is then not anything else for him to do. He who does not think about stealing cannot steal. There is wisdom in the advice which that old Hebrew prophet gave the Israelites in their emergency: "Stand still and see [observe] the salvation of the Lord." They were not to do the work themselves, but only to stand and see it done. God's working is always toward the right. The persistent tendency of activity throughout all things in nature is toward purification. Stagnant water becomes impure; flowing water becomes pure unless impurities are constantly added. Even the Chicago drainage canal, bearing all the filth of that great city, purifies itself in a few miles so that at last even the chemist cannot detect any impurities.

The same is true of the human body. No sooner does an atom in the body become useless or injurious than, without any conscious attention on the part of the person, something goes to work to remove that atom from the system. See, in Gates's experiment, how soon the injurious substance evolved in

the body as a consequence of anger was expelled through the breath. This is only a single instance among a vast multitude. Physiologists tell us that some injurious substances appear in the perspiration in less than a minute after they are swallowed. So strong is this tendency in the human body that when the offending object is of such a character that it cannot be removed, it often occurs, as in the case of a bullet, that a new and entirely distinct process is set up, and the object is enclosed by an impervious sheath which separates it from the surrounding tissues and prevents it from doing any harm to the system.

Even the old biblical writers recognized that the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children only unto the third and fourth generation.[1] So great is the natural tendency of all organized life toward purity! This universal tendency of all nature adds probability to the recognized possibility of final absolute purity, and holds out to man another strong encouragement to aid its accomplishment by acting in accord with these basic mental principles. Both mental and material creation conspires to the same end. If, then, men would stop discordant thinking and thereby cease generating

[1] Exodus xx. 5.

impurities within themselves, how quickly the stream would run clear!

Why will not men aid this tendency by ceasing to plant within themselves the seeds of death and disease, and, instead, let their own harmonious thinking pour in great fresh streams of purity, health, and life? Even if the iniquities of the fathers do continue for three or four generations, they must sooner or later disappear as the filth disappears from the running water, unless other impurities are continuously mingled with the stream of pure life which God gives to every one. Suffering is not the concomitant of life. There is no unavoidable necessity for it. Men are not always to suffer. They can, and they ultimately will, put away discordant thinking, which is the primal cause of all suffering.

A vision of the possibilities lying inherent in these principles makes the old story of the length of life before the deluge seem not altogether impossible. What might not come to man if he would let Nature have her own way and would cease pouring poison into himself in the form of discordant thinking? More than that, may there not be some additional method whereby man may, by compliance with other principles, entirely obviate the necessity

of death and thus bring about a realization of the prophecy of Paul who says that the last enemy to be destroyed is death, thus indicating that death shall at last cease? Evidently God did not mean that men should be sick. Then He did not mean that they should die. Paul and the old prophet were right.[1] "Death shall be swallowed up in victory."

[1] 1 Corinthians xv. 54; Isaiah xxv. 8.

XXV

THE WORRY HABIT

He who would stop discordant thinking must banish from his mind all anxiety for the future and "let the dead past bury its dead," for anxiety about the future is only another name for worry, and regret for things done in the past is its twin sister; both are distinctly antagonistic to all harmonious thinking.

In the literal meaning of the word there is a strong suggestion of the character and attendant conditions of the mental state which it designates. One of its old Anglo-Saxon ancestors, perhaps a grandparent, was used to indicate harm, while another was the name for a wolf, and in Iceland it was the name for an accused person. In our own times the word in its literalness means to choke, to suffocate, to bite at or tear with the teeth as dogs do when fighting, or when "worrying" rats or other small animals.

Metaphorically the word indicates a mental state

fully the equivalent of the physical conditions included in its more literal meaning. In its milder phases it is disturbing, harassing, and harmful; while with its intenser forms it does indeed seize its victim by the throat, as a dog or a wolf might, and choke, and suffocate, and tear with its teeth. If we were to call worry into our consciousness as a person, its aspect would be so terrible that men would flee from it in horror.

The woman who said she "spent half her time doing things and the other half worrying because she had done them," belongs to a very numerous and a very uncomfortable family. To worry over, or regret, what is past is like rethreshing old straw. Time so spent is worse than wasted, for it does not change anything, it occupies valuable time, and no form of useful activity drains the life energies as this mental torture does. It robs one of sleep, sours the disposition, warps the judgment, and makes the mind weak and vacillating.

This is true of every form of anxiety or worry. It is a waste of strength, complete destruction of peace of mind, and one of the most disturbing elements which can invade a household. One individual with the worry habit can poison the atmosphere for all with whom he is associated, for mental dis-

cord is easily communicated, and others are made more or less miserable either by discordant sympathy or by condemnation.

Thus the seed is multiplied, for to condemn another or to give discordant sympathy by being "sorry for him" is to fall into the same kind of an error that he himself has committed. This contagious thinking should stop in its very beginning. That another is mentally disturbed is no excuse for one's own discordant thinking, and to yield to such an influence injures all concerned. As the weaver's shuttle passes from side to side of the loom, so thoughts pass from one to another, entangling many in their meshes and weaving the web of life in brightness or in gloom according as the thoughts are.

Anxiety and worry about the future have their beginning in uncertainty and doubt, and these soon develop into expectancy of evil with manifold visions of things that never happen. Here is the place where effort for the destruction of worry should begin. For illustration: A friend is on a journey. There steals into the mind a thought of uncertainty whether he will reach his destination and return in safety. Right here in this doubt is the parting of the ways. This first discordant thought, no matter how small, should be instantly dropped out of the

mind as unreservedly as a stone may be dropped out of the hand. It can be done more easily right here at the outset than at any other point, and that will end all the trouble. If, instead of doing this, the doubt is allowed to continue and to expand, the discordant thoughts will increase to the same extent, and the discomfort will be exactly proportional.

Perhaps it occurs to the mind that accidents sometimes happen on the road. This thought increases the mental disturbance until finally the picture presents itself of some frightful affair once read about, and this is followed by a condition of worry which destroys all mental serenity and makes life miserable. It is useless to say to the worrier that his visions are entirely unreal. Probably he is aware of that fact, and yet he makes them as real to himself as any event that is passing, and his suffering is as actual and as harmful as any suffering.

This vice, for it is a vice, is so insidious in its approach, so positive in its assertions when it has once made a lodgement in the mind, and so persistent in its hold on its victim, that persuasion or entreaty from another is seldom of any avail. It is not enough to say to the person obsessed that not one traveller in millions is ever injured, nor is it enough

to say that his fears have no foundation save in his own imagination, and that he has brought all his suffering on himself. Such declarations to the confirmed mental inebriate rouse indignation which seriously increases the discord, and he justifies himself by asserting that he cannot help worrying.

He can help it if he will. By his own act, with which another cannot interfere, he can avoid all the misery which worrying would bring into his whole life, as well as the misery which he may inflict on the lives of others. There is no occasion for it outside the victim's own mind. His own thinking and that alone creates the disturbance, it has no existence outside of his own thinking, and a change of his thinking can destroy it.

Not all at once can he do this, perhaps, but he can do it by persistent endeavor. Back at the parting of the ways, when the thought of uncertainty first entered his mind, he might have given his thinking a healthy and harmonious direction by stopping the discordant thoughts which had been suggested by uncertainty and doubt.

He may not have noticed the little thought which began the series, or if he did, he probably considered it too trivial to be worthy of any attention, still less of any effort; yet it was just the kind of thinking

which ought always to be terminated on the instant. To do that is all that is needed; and that done, the terrors which a fertile imagination might conjure up will never present themselves. It matters not whether it is worry about future possibilities or anxiety over things which have passed; at its very beginning is the place to assert one's right to be "kept in perfect peace."

Having decided that he cannot stop worrying, the victim makes no further effort, and the habit becomes more firmly established with each surrender to its wiles and its tortures until he becomes as completely subject to its control as any victim is to either the morphine or the drink habit. The sense of self-pity because his "sympathetic nature" makes his sufferings greater than those of others increases with the habit, and the mental discord goes on generating its poison in its victim beyond the ability of his system to expel it, developing finally into some sluggish disease. When death follows no one calls it suicide, but it surely belongs to that class.

Worry has killed more people than all the hard work that was ever done. Booker Washington very correctly and soberly set forth its results in a single sentence: "I think I am learning more and more each year that all worry consumes, and to no purpose,

just so much physical and mental strength that otherwise might be given to effective work."[1] Hard work with a peaceful, harmonious mind will never kill any one; and when it is accompanied by serenity, hope, and joy, it builds up the system and prolongs existence instead of shortening it; but worry kills, and not to stop it is slow but certain suicide as well as the destruction of much of the joy in the lives of one's best and closest friends. The victims all know the discomfort of it, yet in many cases their failure to stop the worrying comes from disinclination to make the necessary effort.

Whatever the incident or condition which sets the worry thought into activity, the two are as distinct as one pebble from another. The incident is wholly external to the person. The thinking and the thought are entirely within the person. The thinker may have no power over the incident, but he need not concern himself about that; if he will assert himself, he may have complete power over his own thinking, to stop it or to allow it to go on. The sooner and the more fully one recognizes that it is not the incident, but one's own thinking, which causes the trouble the better for him, because it will make his work of reform far less difficult. His

[1] *Up from Slavery*, p. 181.

dominion over his own thinking may be absolute, therefore he may set in motion a train of thoughts entirely distinct from those first suggested by the incident, and he may drive away the whole discordant troop as completely as he would burglars from his house or dogs from his sheepfold.

If one would make a careful and comprehensive examination of the circumstances which provoke discordant thinking, strictly confining himself to this examination and excluding all inharmonious thoughts, he would gain a knowledge of its cause which would enable him to avoid such thinking under all similar circumstances. Such a course will also stimulate mental action, will be helpful to him in all his relations to external circumstances, will be healthful in its action upon his entire system, generate life-giving products instead of poisonous ones, and will give him strength to fulfil the duties of each hour as they arise. Once started in the right way, he may go on through his whole life with an ever increasing recognition of better possibilities and greater powers.

There are no variations in this course of procedure except as the object varies, or as the thinking and its duration vary. As in all mental conditions, though the victim may have assistance from another,

yet the real effort must be made within himself. This mental discipline cannot be begun too soon, nor can it be exercised upon too insignificant conditions. As soon as the milder, incipient stages of the disease are observed the remedy should be unhesitatingly applied with determination and vigor. It should be done in the same way if the disease has progressed into the more extreme conditions, and one must necessarily be one's own surgeon, cutting off the offending thoughts without the slightest hesitation until, by persistent repetition of the operation, he becomes his own master. Instead of paralyzing himself with the weak, self-indulgent thought that he cannot put out the worry, let him dismiss it as he would an unwelcome intruder into his privacy or an objectionable visitor to his home. Let him put up a sign over the entrance to his mind, "no loafers, beggars, nor thieves allowed here," and then relentlessly enforce the prohibition.

It will take a struggle at first, perhaps a square stand-up contest, perhaps a "seven years' war," as was that of our Revolution when the colonies won their freedom, but it will be worth the effort, however great that may be. To the person who excludes worry from his mind and destroys the mental habit the revolution will be more important than was that

war to our nation. It means freedom, comfort, happiness, health, and the prolongation of life.

This training will do more than enable one to banish worry when it tries to invade the mind: it will establish such a mental condition that the discord will not begin, and the eggs that hatch the vultures of worry will never be laid. When the knowledge and practice of this method become universal, they will drive out all the "blue devils" that torment the imagination, exorcise all the "spiritual obsession" that was ever heard about, and prevent any further increase in the population of the insane asylums of the world.

XXVI

BUSINESS SUCCESS

AVOIDANCE of discordant thinking is of immense practical value in business affairs. The man who gives himself over to disappointment, regret, grief, anxiety, worry, or condemnation of himself or others, is not doing anything to forward his business, but he is consciously or unconsciously cultivating a mental condition which will destroy his ability to arrive at correct conclusions and to act upon them promptly and efficiently; therefore, he is either hindering or misdirecting the operations necessary to success, and is wasting his mental and physical strength on injurious activity. All discordant thinking should be stopped at once, and that energy which has been expended in destructive discord should be directed into productive channels. Let him carefully examine the situation, and use every mental effort in making and prosecuting plans for success, without allowing for a moment the thought of possible defeat to paralyze his energies. This is the

advantage held by each one who has previously trained himself in the exclusion of discordant thinking. One who has not done this should begin that training at once. It all lies with himself, and it is never too late to begin.

Herein is the difference between the man of twenty or thirty and the one of fifty. If the older man meets reverses, he seldom recovers himself. The younger man, full of hope and confidence, but without experience and ignorant of the difficulties ahead of him, does not even expect them, but as one by one they appear, fearlessly meets and overcomes them. The older man has experienced all these difficulties, foresees them all, is staggered by his vision of their united magnitude, and supinely allows his own discordant anticipations to frighten him out of making an effort; and yet, except for this, the older man has great advantages over the younger because of knowledge derived from his larger experience with men and things. If the younger man could add to his fearlessness the wisdom of the older one, there is little that could stand before him; and if the older man would divest himself of his doubts, and fears, and anxieties, and would use all his energy and wisdom in meeting the difficulties which he foresees, and which, foreseeing, he can the

better cope with, he might snatch a brilliant success from the very jaws of defeat. The world laughs at the confidence of ignorant youth, but that very confidence, which is really the absence of discordant anticipations, is in itself one great reason for his success. The world may well weep over that degeneration in the older person which arises from his fear of future dangers and difficulties. The younger man overcomes the defects of ignorance by his harmonious thinking which is unmodified by fear of danger, while the older man, notwithstanding his superior wisdom and ability, is defeated by his own discordant thinking.

Herein is a large part of the reason why egotistic persons with only a fair share of ability so often succeed where others of greater ability fail. Their own confidence creates an atmosphere which inspires others with confidence in them and their plans, and, therefore, they receive assistance which helps them to achieve success where those fail who lack that trait. Men often succeed by the very impetus of their own self-confidence, that is, by the power of their harmonious thoughts and the absence of self-distrust and self-condemnation; while others with far greater ability signally fail for no reason except their own hesitation and fear, born of doubt

of themselves. In these two lines of thinking lie two important elements of success or failure. There is neither necromancy nor other mystery connected with it. He who gives up his mind to be preyed upon by doubt, fear, and irresolution is inviting his own defeat and is himself ministering to it, but he who resolutely dismisses all such thoughts is taking the necessary first step toward success.

The man who delivers himself over to discordant thinking is doing the same kind of thing, only in a different way, that the other person does who wastes his time and benumbs his faculties with intoxicants. Many a man has sunk into uselessness, become a burden to his friends and himself, a blot on the name of humanity, solely because he has allowed discordant thoughts to have possession of his mind. Death and insanity find their causes, immediate and remote, in the thinking which men have indulged in.

The man seeking employment, who allows himself to be a prey to despair or other discordant thinking, unwittingly stamps upon his features and moulds into his form and actions peculiarities which those who otherwise would desire his services at once recognize as reasons for refusing his application. But if those thoughts are cut off as an excrescence

would be, and if the mind is filled with that hope, expectancy, and confidence which come from the thought that success is deserved and will be achieved, the gait, the attitude, the glance of the eye, the whole man become transformed, and success seeks him as earnestly as he is seeking success.

It is related that a boy entered a place of business and told the proprietor that his sign, "Boy Wanted," had fallen down. "Well," responded the man, "why didn't you hang it up again?" "Because you don't want one now. I'm the boy you wanted." Whether the story is true or not, it illustrates the confidence which follows the absence of fear, doubt, and their attendant uncertainties, and which is a strong element of success.

It is not enough that the exclusion of discordant thinking shall be done only at the moment of necessity. It should be the continuous mental habit, the result of careful mental training. The stamp of any habitual mental condition cannot be entirely removed on the instant, but each person may always keep his mind in the right condition, and then its physical expression will correspond, and there will not be the other outward appearances to need removal or control.

Before any man dismisses as "nonsense" this

theory of business success through correct and harmonious thinking, let him analyze his own mental habits and compare the results in his business with his varying mental conditions. Let him observe on which days he has done his best work, with the least expenditure of vitality — those filled with cheer and hope and courage, or those in which doubt and despondency held sway. On which days have those associated with him responded best to his wishes? When have things moved most harmoniously? If every man will thus get acquainted with himself and the results of his own mental attitude, he will recognize ample reason why it is no longer good business policy to waste his energy and destroy his efficiency by discordant thinking.

But what if failure should come after strict adherence to this rule of mental control — of what advantage has it been to him who fails? This is his advantage: he remains perfectly poised, his judgment clear, his courage undaunted, his faith in ultimate success unshaken; he is neither a nervous nor a physical wreck, but, instead, is all ready to make a new beginning and to profit by his past mistakes.

XXVII

UNDIVIDED ATTENTION

WHAT precedes shows clearly the method for securing that undivided attention which is so essential to success in all kinds of work, whether mental or physical. "Mind your business" is a wise injunction, even if blunt. It is all embraced in the advice to dismiss all thoughts other than those which pertain exclusively to that which is in hand at the particular moment.

The accountant who allows his mind to wander to other subjects when adding a column of figures cannot do his work so rapidly or so accurately as the one who shuts out all thoughts except those connected with his work. He must cease thinking of other things and think only of his addition. It must be one thing at a time. The ability to exclude one kind of thoughts from the mind enables one to exclude any thought, therefore practice in the exclusion of discordant thoughts will be an efficient preparation for success in avoiding all thoughts

which do not pertain to the work immediately in hand.

When the accountant is in the middle of a long column of figures, perhaps his employer asks him a question. He should have so trained himself in the control of his thinking that on the instant he can shut out of his mind all thought of the work he was doing when the question was asked, think of nothing else but the subject proposed, and answer the question as completely as though he had never thought of his addition. Then, in its turn, that subject, when he is done with it, should be dropped out of his mind completely, and he should return to the work he was doing when interrupted, with a similar exclusion of all else but thoughts of the work in hand.

Such changes should always be accomplished without allowing irritation, impatience, anger, or other discordant thinking because of the interruption. The accountant's time is his employer's, his business is to do the work required by his employer, and whether his employer chooses to set him at one branch of work or another does not concern the employee. Many a clerk, because of occurrences like this, has habitually allowed some form of irritation to take such possession of his mind as to interfere

seriously with his mental ability, ruin his efficiency, and destroy his health. This has caused many a nervous breakdown which was charged to overwork or hard work when its cause was not the work at all, but was solely the frequent irritation — something which the clerk himself might have wholly avoided without any change of action on the part of his employer.

What has been said is true of every occupation and applies to activities of all kinds. The essential condition is that, although nothing may be overlooked or omitted, there should be one thing in the mind at one time — and no more. The mental ability to do this can be attained by the practice already advocated, and the method can be applied to all occupations.

The attention (attention is thinking) should be directed to the one thing that a person is doing to the total exclusion of everything else, whether the work is simple or complicated. If complicated, the attention should be fixed successively on each element of the complication to the exclusion for the time of all the others. When the first item of the series is completed, let it immediately become a thing of the past, because the mind ought to be fully and exclusively occupied with the next; and so on

successively, each in its order, omitting none. If thoughts of other things besides the work in hand are allowed to enter the mind, some point in the execution of the work is liable to be overlooked or perhaps forgotten entirely. The mind cannot successfully attend to two things at once, for a part of the mind can never accomplish as much as the whole, and divided attention always causes inefficiency in some direction. In mental or physical labor the principle is the same, because mental action is at the basis of the whole, and therefore the rule is the same for both.

As in the mental so in the physical, it is only through successful control of the smaller and more minute or apparently insignificant things that ability is gained to grapple with the greater or more abstract and general affairs. This is because the physical action depends on the mental and is caused by it. In every walk of life without exception, and in every period of its course, control of the thinking is of the greatest value and importance. The earlier this control is attained the better, but it is never too late to begin.

Sometimes an almost unnoticed but continuous and persistent undercurrent of some kind of thinking entirely foreign to the work in hand divides and

receives more or less of the attention. This may appear in any one of a thousand forms, having originated in some incident or condition of large or small importance which, for some indefinite reason or apparently for no reason at all, has fastened itself strongly upon the mind. Often this vaguely noticed thought is more difficult to exclude from the attention than one more consciously present, but its presence is a continuous menace to undivided attention; for, panther-like, it stands ready to spring into prominence through the slightest opening of circumstance. When the mind is directly engaged, it makes little difference whether it is mere revery, listlessness, or vagueness which detracts from the attention. The result will be the same. Whatever the character of the intruder, success is gained only by its complete exclusion.

Such a course of procedure as here indicated may be called concentration of the mind upon the particular subject in hand, but concentration is usually accompanied by consciousness of more or less strenuous mental effort, and, as has already been set forth, this mental exclusion should be accomplished without effort — simply by letting go of all thoughts except those directly required for the prosecution of the work. Insomuch as there is stress and

strain, there is instituted a second line of discordant thinking running alongside of the one whose exclusion is desired, and this gives the mind a double duty to perform, thus defeating the object sought by the very effort to accomplish it.

XXVIII

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY TRAINING

THE importance of the early education of children is well understood, because it is recognized that the early training lasts longest and most strongly influences life and character. A modern writer has only echoed the opinion of all careful observers when he says: "More that is elementary — a key to all the rest — is learned in the cradle and beside the mother's chair than in all after time." And a great religious organization is said to hold that if it can have the direction of the young life for its first seven years it cares little who has it afterward.

Every one who has learned the value of the suggestions set forth in these pages, whether through his own experience in their practical application or through his observation of others, has also learned that much pain, suffering, difficulty, and perhaps disaster might have been avoided if he had been taught these things early in life. Recognition of the advantages derived from such teaching takes

one back to the earliest days of childhood and suggests many thoughts of lost possibilities.

He who attempts to instruct along these lines often hears exclamations like these: "What if I had been told when a child!" "Oh, if all children were only taught this! How it would save them, as it would have saved me!" The world only half recognizes the importance of the very earliest training. The child even when in the cradle may be taught. "As the twig is bent the tree is inclined," and the earlier the bending, the more easily is it done.

Painful or disastrous experiences in hard places are not necessary, and they would not have to be endured if, before the time of their occurrence, the proper instruction had been given and received. The child need not burn itself in order to avoid the hot stove, because it may be so instructed by the wise parent that it will avoid the stove without the painful experience. Similarly, in later years, the person need not have the suffering and disease nor the vice and immorality which arise from erroneous thinking, if the proper early instruction has been given.

Without knowing it, the mother is acting in compliance with great fundamental principles when she directs the crying infant's attention to something

different from the cause of its trouble in order that the object of the crying may be forgotten. This change of thought by change of external suggestion is exactly what the physician expects when he sends his patients to new scenes and surroundings. The change of scene induces a change in thinking, and in that way the infirmity is healed. He is merely repeating the mother method.

It is only needed to teach the child to make such mental changes himself while in the midst of the circumstances and suggestions that cause the trouble. This can be done by repeatedly calling the child's attention to what happens when some one else diverts his attention from the cause of his discord, and showing him how he can do the same thing himself without the intervention of another. Such instruction is really cultivation of that most desirable attainment, self-control, because each such incident is really a practical lesson in the art. The importance of this method and its great advantages over abrupt and violent arbitrary command have seldom been fully understood or appreciated. One is along right lines, inviting and receiving the coöperation of the child. The other is wrong in principle and invariably arouses opposition and resistance. One makes. The other literally breaks.

Practical instruction in accordance with the true principles can begin just as soon as the little one has recognized his own thinking, and this occurs much earlier than is usually supposed. Let the intelligent adult turn backward in memory to the time when he first recognized what it is to think. If he has not done this before, he will be surprised to recall how young he was when this experience first came to him. The wise parent can by right suggestion easily make this date much earlier than it otherwise would be. Then, along with the injunctions not to do this or that, can come the similar injunction not to think of the disturbing thing, but to think of something else. If begun early enough, it is little more difficult to teach a child not to think certain thoughts than to teach it not to perform certain acts. Thus in earliest life the most desirable mental habits may be established, and the foundation may be laid for most valuable elements of character.

There is no need of complicating the child's conditions with the large amount of contributing information which the adult often requires before his mind is satisfied of the accuracy of a proposition. That can come later. The child naturally accepts the parental assertion without question, and instruction can be reduced to its very simplest form.

Experience will bring all the rest, and with each experience the habit will become more firmly established.

Very early the child's observation can be directed to the great though simple fact that thinking comes first and that without thinking there will not be any action. Important as this statement is, it is so simple that it is entirely within the possibilities of the child's comprehension, and an understanding of this fact will greatly emphasize the parental instruction. All that will then be needed is cultivation of the moral qualities and an explanation of their relation to the thinking and acting, which should be a part of the training of every child. Of course there must be with this, as there is with all instruction of children, the frequent and patient repetition of precept, explanation, and example. In any kind of training of young or old it is line upon line and precept upon precept. This education cannot begin too soon, nor can it be prosecuted too assiduously.

In this mental training of the child there is a wide field for the parent and an equally wide one for the kindergartner and the primary teacher, and indeed for all teachers; but the secure foundation ought to be laid before the young life comes in con-

tact with those who are called more advanced instructors. Instruction and practice must necessarily continue until perfect control of the mental processes has been gained, and the last trace of erroneous or discordant thinking has disappeared. Nothing less than this should be the object of either child or adult.

Training and education because of the child should begin even earlier than this. Since thinking is the initial action among human actions, it follows that the thought of the mother before the child is born is a formative thought which, to a large extent, decides the mental conditions and character of the infant. Both observation and experiment show that our basic proposition applies here with the same force as elsewhere, though physical changes are inoperative. The mental alone is efficacious. Mutilations do not affect anything beyond the one mutilated. The Chinese have compressed the feet of their girl babies for centuries, yet the girls are born with feet capable of normal development. But the physical type of any race is not any more persistent than their mental characteristics; indeed, their physical peculiarities change with changed mental conditions. The ancient Greeks attained their beautiful bodily configuration by controlling

the mental habits of the mothers, and by thus influencing the physical development of children they controlled that of the whole people. Their object was beauty of form. How much more important and valuable are correct mental and moral characteristics!

The mother, by control of her own thinking, can make what she will of her unborn child. Here in the very beginning of the new life is greater need, greater opportunity, and greater advantage to the child, than the future holds, for the foundation is being laid. But this depends for its success upon the power which the mother herself already possesses through her control of her own mental actions. Both parents have their part here, and therefore both should be ready for doing the appropriate work in the best way; hence they should themselves be already in possession of thorough mental discipline and self-control. This means years of previous self-training for both, but it also means a more advantageous start in life for the child and a better outlook for its future prosperity and success. It also means a better nation and a better race.

In view of these facts the statement of Dr. Holmes that the training of a child should begin three hundred years before its birth does not seem an exag-

geration. An incentive for all young persons to maintain energetically and efficiently the cultivation and practice of mental control lies in the fact that by so doing they are preparing themselves to usher into existence better children, more fully equipped for their places in the world. Thus they are benefiting not only themselves but those who are to be dearer to them than their own lives. President Hall sums up the whole in a very terse and true declaration: "Every experience of body or soul bears on heredity, and the best life is that which is best for the unborn." That which is truly best for one is really best for all.

The grand possibilities for improvement which this opens up for the person, and through the person for the race, are incalculable. The method is simple. Here as much as anywhere, perhaps more than anywhere else, appear the value and influence of the right mental action of each in its effect on others and on the world at large.

XXIX

THREE NOTABLE EXAMPLES

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE possessed most remarkable control of his thinking, which enabled him to exclude from his mind completely all those thoughts which he chose, and thus not only devote his entire attention to the one subject in hand, but even seemingly to make himself over into another personage.

It is claimed that he was naturally humane, generous, and sympathetic. If this be true, then he could effectually dismiss all such thoughts from his mind, because he could become as hard as steel. At one time he seemed dominated by one set of ideas, and by another set at another time. He was, indeed, so changeable as to puzzle not only his biographers, but the world. So complete were his changes that his admirers are uncertain which was the real man. The probability is that one was as real as the other, because his own statements indicate that these peculiarities were the result of intended change of thinking as the circumstances or

his judgment dictated. "He compared his mind to a chest of drawers, where each subject occupied its separate space. In turn he opened each drawer. No one subject got mixed with another. When all the drawers were shut he fell asleep. Of course this was not literally true, but during his best years it came as near being literally true as is possible to the human brain." [1]

In his life there were many instances of this perfect control of his own thinking. When his preparations had been made and his troops were engaged in battle, if all was going as he had planned, he could slumber peacefully while the most horrible carnage was in progress. He did this repeatedly. At Jena he slept on the ground while the battle raged. At Austerlitz, after his arrangements had been completed, he slept in the straw of a hut as peacefully as an infant. These things were possible only through his great mental control; and though there is much in his career that cannot be commended and should not be emulated, yet his mental control was most admirable. He is one of the great examples of what can be accomplished by this means, and every one may profitably pattern after him in this respect.

[1] Watson's *Napoleon*, p. 401.

George W. Smalley, writing of Gladstone, says: "If Mr. Gladstone had one mental characteristic more distinctly marked than another, it was his power of absolutely excluding any given subject from his mind and concentrating his whole intellectual energy on some other subject. Always, whatever it was, one at a time. In the same way he could and would exclude all subjects when the time came for rest." [1]

In the same article he quotes what Mr. Gladstone says of himself: "Of course it has been an anxious life. I have had to make many decisions of the highest importance in public affairs. I have given each one of them the best attention I could. I have weighed arguments and facts, and made up my mind as best I could, and then dismissed the subject. I have had to make a great many speeches, and have made them as well as I knew how, and then an end. But if, after I had taken a decision or made a speech, I had begun to worry over it and to say to myself, 'Perhaps I ought to have given greater weight to this or that fact, or did not fully consider this or that argument, or might have put this consideration more fully in my speech, or turned this sentence better, or made a stronger ap-

[1] *Harper's Monthly*, August, 1898.

peal to my audience' — if I had done this instead of doing my best while I could and then totally dismissing the matter from my mind, I should have been in my grave twenty years ago."

Jacob Riis says in his story of President Roosevelt: "The faculty of forgetting all else but the topic in hand is one of the great secrets of his success in whatever he has undertaken as an official. It is the faculty of getting things done. They tell stories yet, that go around the board of class dinners, of how he would come into a fellow-student's room for a visit, and, picking up a book, would become immediately and wholly absorbed in its contents, then wake up with a guilty start to confess that his whole hour was gone, and hurry away. In all the wild excitement of the closing hours of the convention that set him in the vice-president's chair, he, alone, in an inner room, was reading Thucydides, says Albert Shaw, who was with him. He was resting. I saw him pick up a book in a lull in the talk the other day, and instantly forget all things else."

XXX

THE PENALTY FOR SIN

ALTHOUGH exclusion of discordant thinking carries with it avoidance of discordant physical conditions, let it not be imagined that the sinner, by the exclusion from his mind of such thoughts as sorrow, regret, remorse, and self-condemnation, can escape the rightful penalty for his deeds. His sinful course is itself discordant and produces its own discordant consequences from which there is no escape except by abandoning it. Each discordant condition has its own consequences, and the exclusion of one of those conditions from the mind does not bring avoidance of the consequences of the others. It is true that a man may avoid all the suffering which might be caused by regret if he will exclude regret from his mind, but that would not in the slightest relieve him of the suffering which the commission of sin has already caused.

It may be said that the suffering occasioned by remorse for acts committed is directly attributable to those acts themselves, for had there not been any

such acts, there would not have been any such thoughts. Grant this; but each discordant thought brings its own punishment, and the sinner would have no more suffering from such thoughts than would the virtuous person who, laboring under the mistake that he has acted wrongly, gives himself up to thinking of this kind.

A case in point is that of a clergyman of upright and exemplary life and character who in some way became possessed by the erroneous idea that he had committed the unpardonable sin. His remorse and despair were extreme, and he sank into his grave, a victim of the discordant thoughts which were provoked by his hallucination. It cannot be said that his suffering and death were the result of his sin, because he had not sinned; they were the result of his discordant thinking.

Of course, in the case of the sinful man, as with the innocent, suffering may be occasioned by grief, regret, remorse, and the like, and it may be avoided by avoiding such thinking; but that erroneous thinking which culminates in what is called sin is discordant in and of itself alone, and out of these discordant conditions must come their legitimate discordant results independent of whatever may arise from any other source and in addition to it.

This discordant thinking and acting is a class by itself, and its results must stand in a class by themselves; therefore, though a man may banish all other discordant thinking and acting and thus avoid their consequences, yet he will still have the discord caused by his sinning, and he cannot escape its results.

Though such a man may present the appearance of health and strength, yet his error will surely find him out. One need not flatter himself that he can evade the penalty of a single evil, sinful, or discordant thought or action, by harmonious thinking and pure conduct in all other particulars. The penalty for the single violation can no more be avoided than can the greater penalty when all the thoughts and actions are discordant. Thinking produces actions like itself; the error thought not only perpetuates itself but develops and enlarges its own error, and sooner or later suffering of some kind follows. It is as inevitable as that consequences follow causes. One must put away *all* sinful thinking and acting if he would escape all penalty. Banished discord does not leave any sting in its trail, but just so far as it is indulged it will surely bear its bitter fruit.

The deed that is done is beyond recall; the word that is spoken cannot be unsaid; the thought that

has flashed across the horizon of the mind has left its image, like that of lightning across the sky, and each has shot its consequences into the future. There is nothing more inevitable than these consequences, whether for good or for evil. The good result from the good is just as sure as the bad result from the bad; nature works with absolute impartiality; it rests with each man to decide which it shall be, good or evil. The world may never see the consequences of a man's act; his most intimate friends may not suspect it; he may not himself connect his condition with it; but the consequence is inevitable.

Neither the world, nor the man's enemies, nor his intimates, need to trouble themselves; he will surely reap the consequences of his conduct. Men, whether friends or enemies, are always too prone to condemn; but, whatever their opinion, their condemnation can be neither right nor wise; nor is it needed to bring about the results which are justly due. Those who indulge in condemnation may have no compunctions about it and may think it is deserved by the culprit, yet such thinking is itself discordant, and the penalty for discordant thinking will never fail to reach him who sits in judgment on another.

Even the libertine and the murderer who are never found out, and those who escape punishment by legal process, will get the just reward for their course. Though the man who commits a wrong may, in his own mind, justify himself for it, or, because of erroneous thinking, may even have the opinion that he has done an admirable act, yet his course will finally bring down upon him its consequences in some form of suffering or deprivation though it be nothing more than the condition of not knowing, not understanding, and thus not receiving and not having those desirable qualities or things which otherwise would have been his. While such deprivations may be considered mild punishment, yet who can measure their extent or their importance; and who shall judge?

The punishment inflicted by man upon his brother man is of the same general character, for it consists almost wholly in depriving the condemned person of what would otherwise belong to him and be enjoyed by him. What else is a fine but depriving a man of property; or imprisonment but depriving him of freedom; or the extreme penalty of the law but depriving him of his life? In one way or another, part or all of these will come to the erring man without the intervention of another; and with

them will come many other conditions which no one else could inflict upon him. Of vastly more importance than all else is the loss of those mental and moral qualities which the wrong-doer, by his own action, deprives himself of. He finds indeed that "the wages of sin is death" — death to all his nobler and higher instincts.

For centuries the fear of hell has been considered a restraint on the wicked; but the punishment here noted is more unerring and more certain. There is not any postponement to an indefinite future nor is there any way of escape. It has its beginning in the very act itself, even in the thought which produced the act, just as the plant exists in the seed, the cause in its consequence. The man who lies must tell a dozen more to cover that one, and will always be haunted by the fear of being found out. Thus the error becomes its own punishment, which is from within itself and is in the form of more and greater error. The consequence must in every case be exactly adjusted to its cause, therefore the punishment must be exactly proportioned to the guilt. The scales of natural justice are always balanced with even fidelity. Gravitation is not more steadfast. Indeed, error is the gravitation of morals, but it does not have a stopping-place as the falling stone

has. It is itself the bottomless pit. It is its own destiny, ordained and unchangeable. Principle never changes; causation never falters nor wavers.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the way of escape from punishment is included in this unwavering inviolability of principle which punishes so relentlessly. There is forgiveness for the evil, but only in the entire abandonment of the evil course of acting, speaking, or thinking. Their continuance, or the continuance of either of them, is the continuance of the cause, and that is the inexorable and sure continuance of their consequences; but it is the cause which produces the consequences, and if the cause is not allowed to exist, there will not be any consequences. The seed of the thistle need not be planted, and then there will not be any thistles; but even if it has been planted and has already sprung up, it may be cut down and its roots may be dug out so as to exterminate it completely.

XXXI

A STORY AND ITS LESSON

AVOIDANCE of discordant thinking is of great social as well as personal advantage to the one who has attained it. It is a mild power, but it is of tremendous effectiveness.

Whether we know it or not, we always arouse thoughts in others similar to those which fill our own minds. Anger in one person provokes anger in others, and love begets love. Fear brings fear, and confidence inspires confidence. The cheerfulness of one person will pervade a roomful, and if persisted in it may extend to a whole neighborhood. Even the most retiring and least assertive have their influence upon others far beyond their own recognition.

Intention does not alone control the impression made upon another, because there may be a difference between its character and the method of its execution which may produce a result contrary to that intended; besides, there may be some strong dominant thought in the background which is quite

different from the intention. Mere possession of this positive thought, without any effort or desire on the part of the thinker, affects and influences others, and the more earnest or positive the thought, the more efficacious will it be, and the more certain and definite will be the result. It does not need any intention to influence others, but only the earnest desire on the part of the thinker himself to be right and to think right.

A teacher in one of the public schools of Boston had an assistant assigned to her in her schoolroom. This threw two strangers into close relationship during the school hours of every day. They soon found that they were each in such a mental condition that if either made a suggestion or expressed an opinion it disturbed or irritated the other. The mental disturbance or irritation thus aroused was a mild form of anger, though each would have preferred to call it by some other name. This was of such frequent occurrence that it colored the whole day. After mature deliberation the teacher decided not to allow this mental disquiet in herself. She resolved to stop thinking the discordant or angry thoughts, however slight they might be.

The opportunity to put her resolution into effect

came very soon after it was made. The assistant said something which irritated her. Affairs in the room were in such a condition that she could sit at one of the desks and labor with herself in the attempt to stop her own discordant thinking. During the effort she did not try in any way to influence the assistant; indeed, she did not once think of doing so. Her attempt was to change her own mental condition and to cleanse her own mind of all discordant thinking. Her work was with herself alone.

She found that it required more effort and occupied a longer time than she had anticipated, but this only intensified her determination to set herself right. After a while she experienced the pleasure of success. The discordant thoughts all disappeared and harmonious ones took their places. A delightful revulsion of feeling followed. A harmonious glow filled her whole being, and she rejoiced that she had triumphed over her own discordant thinking.

She sat in her place a little longer in order more firmly to establish her present mental condition and to fortify herself against a return of the discordant thinking, as well as to enjoy the pleasure of her present satisfaction, when something

occurred which greatly surprised her. The assistant came and sat down beside her, took her hand in a half-caressing way as it lay upon the desk, and, in a tone of voice which she had never recognized from her before, asked about something which was going on in the schoolroom. The discord had also ceased in the assistant's mind, and harmony had taken its place. The division between them was healed.

Seemingly this was a little incident, but it is important because it illustrates an important principle of mental action which is always at work between people who are thrown into close relationship with each other. By her earnest work with herself to stop her own discordant thinking, the teacher had changed the condition of her own mind, and, without any intention or even thought about it on her own part, this change had so affected the assistant as to work a mental revolution in her mind also. The close relationship between minds is such that when the teacher had recovered her own mental poise the assistant, without conscious thought or intention, regained hers also.[1] Such is the effect of banishing dis-

[1] "Through waves of an atmosphere unseen by the physical eye, the sound of the church bell is conveyed to our ears. Through the

cordant thoughts from one's own mind and introducing positive and harmonious ones in their places.

The old saying that it takes two to quarrel is true, and it is equally true that the mental relationship between man and man is such that it takes two to be angry. If one of the angry parties ejects all discordant thinking from himself and waits without impatience or any other kind of discordant thinking, the anger of the other one must stop of itself. It has nothing to feed upon.

In the case of the teacher and her assistant it is certain that there was discordant thinking; perhaps at first it was only on the part of one (it is of no consequence which), but it communicated itself to the other, increasing as time went on, and it continued until one of them assumed positively the right mental attitude for herself, and then it ceased with the other.

This incident suggests the course to be pursued in all misunderstandings or quarrels. The one who recognizes the situation should at once set

vibrations of an ether which the finest instrument cannot discern, the light from distant stars is brought to our organs of vision. Is it more wonderful to believe that through an unseen medium of mind we are sending rays of silent influence into the lives of others?" — LOREN B. MCDONALD in *Guarding the Thoughts*, p. 17

his own mind at peace, sweeping it clear of all discordant thoughts concerning the attendant actions and conditions, regardless of their character and without any question of how or where they originated or who was to blame; this done, he should in every particular keep his mind in a condition of perfect harmony toward the other — and wait. Waiting will do the rest. "They also serve who only stand and wait;" and especially is this the case if, in addition to the waiting, they maintain the right mental condition.

Unless it comes about naturally and without effort there should not be any verbal attempt at reconciliation. Very often the best-intentioned predetermined efforts of this kind fail of success. Complete control of one's own mind in such cases will never fail. This does not mean that when one finds he has done wrong, he must not say so to the one he has wronged; but even this is not advisable until the confession can be made without the slightest discordant stir in himself. Discord in one person rouses it in another, and even allusion to the subject which has once caused inharmony may arouse it again.

It should be expressly noted that in the case just cited the teacher did not do the work in her-

self for the purpose of affecting the assistant, nor for any other but the one sole object of making herself right. This mental attitude is of first importance. To purify one's own self for the sake of purifying others is commendable, but it is not so praiseworthy as when undertaken with the single object of correcting one's own faults. It will then better affect and assist others than if it were undertaken for that object. It is only with one's own self that one has to deal — never interfering with another unless assistance is asked.

When there has been anger between two people, for one of them to undertake by word or deed to set the other right would frustrate all the good intentions in the world unless the one who attempts it has already first completely accomplished it in himself. Even then success may be very doubtful. Indeed, just here is where grave mistakes are often made in trying to solve any social problem. Every person is prone to lay the blame on another and then to try to make that other one right instead of turning his whole attention to correcting the error in himself. Correction of the other person by one of the parties to a quarrel is impossible in nine cases out of ten, and especially is this true when the discordant thought of

condemnation exists in the mind of the one who makes the attempt.

Epictetus was right when he declared: "However he treats me, I am to act rightly with regard to him; for the one is my own concern, the other is not." Acting and thinking are so closely allied that this rule applies as much to the one as to the other. It is a maxim of the soundest philosophy that nothing another does can ever make it right for me to do wrong, because wrong is never right, and no combination of circumstances can ever make it so.

When the teacher had removed the discord from her own mind, she discovered that it had disappeared from the assistant's also. Had she attempted to correct the assistant's error instead of correcting her own, the discord might never have been healed. Although the assistant's action was set in motion by what the teacher did, yet the assistant's thinking and acting were her own and not the teacher's. Another's thoughts become our own only when we accept them as ours. Reformation is at last one's own work.

In fact, as seen in the principle set forth in these pages, each can reform only one person in the world, and that one is himself. However much the sug-

gestion to reform may come from another, yet all reformation is essentially self-reformation, because all thinking is one's own thinking, and thinking is the causative power. This does not exclude assisting some one else when assistance is asked for, nor does it prohibit extending all good feeling and brotherly love to others. Indeed, the underlying principle requires this, because otherwise one's own mind cannot be in a harmonious condition; but the work is, after all, one's own work with one's own self. When he has cast out the beam from his own eye, then shall he see clearly to cast out the mote from his brother's eye; but in the process of removing the beam he will most probably have effected the removal of the mote also, and therefore he shall then see that there is nothing to be removed from the eye of his brother.

XXXII

THE STORY OF A CONTRACT

A MAN whom we will call Smith because that is not his name had a contract with a carpenter to build a house. When the work was about half done, the carpenter came and said that he was in distress because of certain financial obligations which were about to mature, and that he would be greatly accommodated if he could have immediately all the money that would be due him when the house should be completed. Smith had the money in the bank and gave it to him. All went well until the house was very nearly done. Then the carpenter left it and went to other work, much to Smith's disadvantage.

Several weeks passed, and, as there was no indication that anything further would be done on the house, Smith sent to the carpenter and asked when he was going to finish his work. The reply came back that he had done all he intended to do on the house and, besides, he was too mad to talk

about it; whereupon Smith got angry, too, but upon consideration he decided to make a practical test of the principles which were so successfully followed by the teacher. He put out of himself all anger and condemnation of the carpenter, as well as all other discordant thoughts, so that he was able without mental discord to review the whole transaction, his favor to the carpenter, the disadvantage of the delay, and even the rudeness of the reply to his inquiry. Then he went to see the carpenter. When he met him and saw the muscles of his face stiffen and his whole countenance harden as he looked up, even that did not rouse any discordant thinking in Smith's mind, so thoroughly was he under the right mental control. They immediately began talking about the unfinished work, and in less than ten minutes the carpenter, without being requested to do so, offered to go back and finish his job. Smith told him that he might send one of his workmen, but he insisted on going himself. The carpenter went and did all the work required, including some extras which he cheerfully declined to accept pay for.

The effective consideration in this case was the successful effort that Smith made to clear his own mind from discord. As in the case of the teacher,

here was also an entire absence of any attempt to influence the carpenter by any mental means whatsoever. No one's rights were assailed or interfered with in the slightest. There was nothing concealed or underhanded. There was no compulsion or attempt at compulsion. All the influence Smith exercised over the carpenter was in a fair, face-to-face, open conversation, with only harmony in his own mind behind his words. The result was much pleasanter and far more successful than any attempt at compulsion could have been. Indeed, any such attempt, accompanied as it would have been by recrimination and angry words, would have intensified the carpenter's feelings and defeated Smith's object. Where anger has ruled, expensive lawsuits have grown out of incidents of far less importance. It was much cheaper than a lawsuit would have been in the expenditure of both money and energy of every kind, to say nothing of the long train of evils arising from hostile feelings. Nothing is necessary in a dispute except that one of the parties shall put away all discordant thinking.

Perhaps some one may claim inability to do as Smith did under such conditions, and that may be true; but every one can do it on occasions of

less importance; and if he does not let any incident slip, but accomplishes the exclusion of his discordant thinking in each one of the smaller affairs, he will soon be able to do the same thing in the gravest and most important situations. As an illustration of how business may be conducted successfully, this incident has its lesson. If this plan were followed by everybody, one large and important class in the community would change its occupation for a more productive one.

The same principle is illustrated in a dispute which occurred over the boundary line between two pieces of property. The owner of one piece claimed that the fence was in the wrong place and should be removed so as to include in his own tract quite a strip of the land of his neighbor. Angry feelings and discordant thinking resulted. A lawsuit grew out of it and dragged along for years. Each asserted that he cared very little for the land, but insisted he was contending for a principle. The quarrel grew and prospered with small prospect of settlement until one of the parties was tired out and sold his land to get rid of the difficulties.

The purchaser was the very reverse of quarrelsome, and all who knew the circumstances won-

dered that he had bought property encumbered with a lawsuit. His action showed his wisdom. At the first favorable opportunity he approached the claimant and after a few pleasant words asked him where he believed the fence ought to be. The claimant pointed out the place very carefully. When this had been definitely fixed, the new owner said: "If you will move the fence to that place, I will pay half the expense of the removal, since it is a line fence." The claimant was surprised. He had been met by a man who had only harmony in his heart and was overcome by it. The fence continues to stand in its old place, the lawsuit is dismissed, and the two men are fast friends.

Such is the power of non-resistance when combined, as it always should be, with harmonious mental conditions in the mind of one of the parties to a quarrel.

XXXIII

THE STORY OF A NOTE

A GENTLEMAN borrowed five hundred dollars of a widow, giving his note. Soon afterward her eldest son got into trouble of such a kind that the penitentiary was in prospect for him. The borrower investigated the situation, and found that the young man had done wrong, but that the action was without criminal intention. Older and designing persons had taken advantage of his inexperience and had made him a tool for the execution of their own illegal purposes. The borrower used his influence in the proper way, saved the young man from disaster, and set him on his feet. Warned and instructed by this experience, he made a man of himself. Not very long afterward the second son of the widow fell into serious, though not so grave, difficulties, and the borrower extricated him also from his dilemma. In the meantime the note was not paid because the man was not able, and, too, although he had not made any claim for it, he thought that he

ought to have some consideration for his services to the two sons.

After a few years the widow died. Now there must be a settlement; but the borrower hoped the son who had been so efficiently befriended would be made administrator of the estate. Instead, a son-in-law was appointed, a man who, though successful in business, had the reputation of not being very particular as to the methods by which he attained success. This did not indicate leniency about the payment of the note, but the borrower allowed things to drift without any action until the legal time for the settlement of the estate had nearly expired. He then began to think that the administrator had decided to let the whole subject drop, when one day an officer walked into his place of business and served a warrant on him for a thousand dollars. Delay could no longer continue. Something must be done. The question was, "What?" The borrower decided to begin by regulating his own mind, and succeeded so well that without mental discord he could think of all the incidents and persons connected with the affair, including his own remissness in not attending to the business as he ought to have done.

A few days before the time to appear and an-

swer the warrant he sought out the administrator and told him that he had come to talk about the note. To the direct questions which the administrator asked he responded frankly that he made the note in good faith, that the signature was his own, that he received the money at the time he gave the note, and that he had not paid anything, not even the interest. Of course, such admissions to the administrator would ruin his case in any court. He then said that he thought two men of average intelligence who wanted nothing but what was right could themselves settle such a question as this without the intervention of the law. He maintained his own harmonious frame of mind while he told the administrator the whole story, and then the subject was discussed between them. The result was that at the end of an amicable conference of half an hour, without any suggestion or request from the borrower, the administrator offered to "call the whole thing square" without the payment of any money.

Avoidance of discordant thinking is of immense and direct importance, and even of money value, in business transactions; and yet all this is only controlling the mental action so as to keep it within the lines indicated by principle.

XXXIV

A DISCUSSION OF THE STORIES

THESE incidents, which are absolutely true, are a practical demonstration of the importance of thought control in all social and business affairs, and they also show what may result from maintaining one's own mind in harmonious conditions, keeping it as closely as possible in the exact and perhaps seemingly narrow way of undoubted and unquestionable right without any attempt either directly or indirectly to influence any one else. They are illustrations of the action of a power which, though not always recognized, is constantly operating among men; and they show why some persons utterly fail in their attempts, while yet others hinder and even pervert their own efforts. This power lies in the ability to control mental conditions and to establish the right mental state in one's own mind. This state, once established and maintained, works effectually toward the accomplishment of right results in one's own self

and in others, and does this without any conscious effort of the person.

The really efficient work for others must follow work with one's own self. Without that all else fails. In neither of these cases cited did the one most interested attempt by any mental procedure, either surreptitious or otherwise, to influence the mind or actions of the other. In each case it was a frank, open, face-to-face transaction. To have done otherwise would have been specially reprehensible, and such a course would bear the same relation to rightful mental action that stealing does to legitimate financial transactions.

It is only a step from attempting to influence another mentally and in the right direction, but without his knowledge, to the attempt to influence him in doubtful or wrong ways. After all, who shall say that his own idea of right is absolutely without flaw, or even what is advisable or best for another? Can one always decide these questions for one's self? How much less, then, for another, especially when the most sincere and earnest convictions of the wisest men so contradict one another! And how shall one know what another wishes unless the wish is expressed? Secretly to influence another against his wishes

is to dominate him. Far too often has this underhanded action been used to gain one's own purpose; and yet, many times, this has been done with the sincere conviction that it was a kindness or a duty and therefore was right and just and even praiseworthy. How wisely did Burns sing:—

> "When self the wavering balance shakes
> 'Tis rarely right adjusted."

The thug of India not only believes he is right in strangling his victim, but he also believes, as sincerely and earnestly as any one else believes the contrary, that it is his religious duty and that his action will result in an immense advantage to the one he strangles. He is as sincere in this as most Christians are in their belief about what they ought to do for others, or even in their belief that what the thug does is wrong. Equally sincere are most of those who attempt secret mental influence. But the belief that they are right does not make them so. Right is right, whatever may be the opinion of any one about it; and however conscientious one may be in an erroneous opinion, that conscientiousness does not make that opinion right.

There is only one thing either necessary or advisable, and that is to set one's own mind in order,

making it right according as one sees the right, and then to leave the rest to the unrecognized but sure working of correct principles; remembering, of course, that this does not exclude a frank, open discussion of the differences after discord has been dismissed from the mind.

These incidents show the errors contained in two widely accepted opinions of humanity, and an understanding of these errors will greatly assist him who is striving for mental self-control.

The first is the almost universal tendency to lay the blame for one's failures or mistakes at the door of some other person or to charge it to the influence of one's surroundings. The Edenic plea of both Adam and Eve — Adam because of Eve, Eve because of the serpent (the serpent was not asked to speak for himself) — has availed to satisfy both men and women ever since the earliest dawn of history; but it has not yet availed, nor will it ever avail, to avert the natural consequences of one's own acts.

Often it is enough to silence the average man's conscience when he thinks that he would not have committed the offence if it had not been for attendant circumstances. It is thought excuse enough for breaking an engagement to plead bad weather;

anything or everything outside the person, trivial or important, is sufficient excuse to justify any failure, any neglect, and very often even an overt act. Though all this is wrong, yet every one is accustomed to these excuses, and most of us have used them in the attempt to satisfy our own compunctions and to effect an escape from difficulties which we have ourselves brought upon our own heads.

It is the mental condition that produces the action in every case, and each person is responsible for his own mental condition. Between the external circumstance and our action is always our own thinking, and it is that thinking and not the external circumstance or condition which decides what our action shall be. If Eve's thinking about the tree and its fruit had been different, — that is, if she had come to some different conclusion about the questions presented in that connection, — her action would have been different. The same is also true of Adam. It was not the serpent and it was not the presence and character of the tree, — though each had a part in the course of events, — but it was their own final mental conclusion, which decided what their action should be. That mental conclusion was their own, and not

another's, and, therefore, no one else but themselves was responsible for their actions. Thus it has always been with every Eve and every Adam. Whether the story of Adam and Eve is accepted as veritable history or considered as a fable, it admirably illustrates a nearly universal defect of humanity.

For the man who owed the note, a lawsuit with the prospect of its attendant evils was all ready to his hand. The same was impending over Smith and the contractor. Had either Smith or the man who owed the note failed to control his thinking, he might have said: "I was not responsible for this trouble. Others began it." In both cases the events as they transpired show that each would have been himself responsible, because it was clearly in his power to avert the disaster. Every man claims praise for the good result as the consequence of his right action. On the same basis, how can he avoid blame if, by his own erroneous thinking, he increases the difficulty and brings about evil results?

This leads to the consideration of a second mistaken but very prevalent opinion, and it also leads to an understanding of the erroneous actions consequent upon that opinion.

A large part of mankind are zealously striving to reform all the rest of the world except themselves. Every one sees how another ought to conduct himself, and each is doing his best to effect the desired reformation in his neighbor, because he believes with the good old Quaker, "All the world is queer except thee and me, and thee is a little queer." We have reformers on all sides trying to persuade men to avoid every evil that afflicts mankind; and we have governments with courts of justice and prisons attempting forcibly to prevent men from doing wrong or to compel them to do right. All these means and measures no doubt accomplish much good, at least as educators; and the motive behind them all is excellent.

In point of fact, however, no one can reform another, although each can reform himself, and by that reformation may so influence others that they will also reform themselves. The reformation at last is one's own work done by one's own self. Of course there may be and ought to be wise suggestions, assistance, encouragement, advice, counsel, thus giving much help to others in a multitude of ways whenever it is desired; but, notwithstanding all, the essential and only really

vital and effective work must be done by one's own self. This is because thinking is the fundamental act without which nothing can be accomplished, and one cannot think with another's mind any more than he can see with another's eyes.

The teacher might have remonstrated with her assistant, but probably it would have had no result except to antagonize and irritate her and intensify the already troublesome conditions. Without any attempt whatever in that direction the effort of the teacher to reform herself wrought wonders in the reformation of her assistant.

The contractor was manifestly blameworthy because he had not done all that he had agreed to do, and he surely needed reforming. The owner of the property by due process of law might have compelled him to complete the work, but there would not have been any reformative result from that action. In any attempt to enforce reform upon the contractor the result attained through the self-reformation of the property owner would have been lost, and in the end both would have been worse off mentally and morally.

In the case of the note it is true that payment might have been avoided by some legal process, questionable or otherwise; but that would have

produced various and serious discordant conditions for all concerned, and probably it would have resulted in very serious injury to the borrower. All these probabilities are in sharp and unfavorable contrast with the harmonious results which followed the borrower's reformation of himself.

The fact is clearly apparent in these and multitudes of other incidents that, whether we intend it or not, our unspoken thoughts influence those with whom we come in contact; and this presents the control of our thinking in a new aspect and gives it an immensely increased value when considered in connection with our relationship to our fellows. Max Müller said: "The only thing of consequence, to my mind, is what we think, what we know, what we believe."

Herein is the secret of the immense influence of good lives. As has been shown so clearly, the kind of life one lives is the product of the kind of thinking one does, and the good thinking sheds itself abroad upon others as the sun radiates light, without any intention or effort. Therefore Jesus said: "Let your light shine." He did not say: "Make it shine." Leave the light alone, but have it, and it will shine of itself. Interference

and assistance often hinder. The very best one can do is *to* BE. The measure of the influence of a man, whether preacher or layman, is found in what he is rather than in what he says; perhaps least of all in what he intends.

This explains one great secret of the tremendous power and permanence of the influence of Jesus, the Christ, who not only taught and did right, living the right life, but who also — the underlying cause of all — thought right. The results which came to him will also come to us in proportion as we keep ourselves right.

The opinion has generally been held that a person has the right to think what he pleases, but this is not correct. In one sense a man's thoughts are not his own any more than are his words when once uttered. We know the word from the speaker goes out to bless or to curse, and recall is impossible. It is the same with the thought also. As he should not have uttered the wrong word, so he ought not to have allowed the existence of the wrong thought.

In point of fact every thought, whatever its character may be, produces its definite result, not only whether we will or not, but in spite of the will we may exercise to prevent it. "Then every

thought of disease, every imagination of fear or distrust or gloomy foreboding, would scatter, and, like contagion, depress the lives of others. Then every sentiment of hate would have in it a little of the real effect of murder, every harsh judgment would carry a vital effect of ill. Every thought of doubt or despair would make it harder for others to bear their burdens and believe in the infinite good." [1]

This is a dark side of the picture, but it is not overdrawn. A man is indeed responsible for his speech and his acts; he is also equally responsible for the thoughts which cause them, and he should guard his thoughts even more carefully than he does his acts. But there is a bright side also. A man can control his thinking much more easily than he can his speaking and acting when his thinking is not first controlled. Better still, he can control that thinking in the right direction, and when this is done, its consequences are so controlled that they need no attention whatever, and there is no further responsibility nor danger.

[1] L. B. McDonald in *Guarding the Thoughts.*

XXXV

SENSITIVENESS

SENSITIVENESS is the tendency or disposition to be easily affected by external objects, events, or conditions. We say that a person is sensitive who is so delicately constituted that he is keenly susceptible of external influences or impressions, is easily affected or moved by outward circumstances, and responds quickly to very slight changes of condition. Though so often misunderstood and condemned, it is one of man's greatest blessings. The peculiar sensitiveness of the optic nerve gives sight. Deficient sensitiveness of that nerve causes imperfect sight; entire lack of it is blindness. The greater its sensitiveness, the better the sight and the more we may see, and know, and understand, if we will only use it as we should; that is, if the perception is followed by the right kind of thinking. This is true of every perception.

Superiority in any sphere is unattainable without that sensitiveness which confers larger knowledge

and understanding. There is much discussion about what constitutes genius; at least one element without which it cannot exist is an extreme degree of this very sensitiveness, and the degree of sensitiveness often determines the degree of genius.

It is this characteristic which enables the musician to perceive shades of tone which another cannot hear. It gives him information essential to the execution of delicate musical passages impossible to others who do not possess the quality in the same degree; and in directing an orchestra or a chorus it is this which enables him to perceive advantages and defects which would pass unnoticed by one less favored. This keenness of perception is indispensable to leadership.[1]

On the other hand, there are persons who cultivate themselves into spasms over a discord, and, by glorifying their suffering as a mark of superiority, they unintentionally provoke similar disturbing conditions in their associates. This agitation is the result of their thinking, and thinking is entirely distinct from sensitiveness. By avoiding their inharmonious thoughts about the discord they will

[1] Theodore Thomas had so cultivated his sensitive ear that not only could he detect the slightest discord, but he could tell which one of the instruments in his large orchestra produced it.

also avoid the disturbance they create, and this may be accomplished without the loss of a single pleasure. An ear rightly trained to listen and to catch the slightest variations may take note of all the imperfections, but they will never bring pain if the thinking is rightly controlled; and the more sensitive the ear, the greater the pleasure, because the mind can better perceive the exquisite beauties of the music, dwell upon them, and luxuriate in them.

The question is whether the mind shall be occupied with the defects of the music to the exclusion of consciousness of its beauties, or occupied with its beauties to the exclusion of its defects. Each person may decide for himself which it shall be. If he chooses discord it will be discordant in proportion to the character and intensity of his thinking; if harmony then harmony. The sensitiveness is only a servant to minister to either pain or pleasure at one's own behest, but it is very efficient and capable of bestowing immense advantages if the thinking is what it ought to be. This is the condition not only in relation to music but in every case where sensitiveness is concerned.

Psychologists say that in the beginning we were not able to understand many of the messages of the

senses, but that through our experience we have come to recognize without conscious effort the relation to us of those things outside of ourselves which are revealed by our senses. We are continually educating ourselves in the various phases of sense perception, and we use that education for our advantage. We should do the same with every form of sensitiveness, including all the more subtle and less understood faculties which minister to our consciousness.

When two people first meet, they receive impressions in addition to anything that is communicated by the eye, the ear, or the clasp of the hands. Through means and in a way not clearly understood, each perceives something of the other and recognizes conditions not revealed by the senses. There are a vast number of these perceptions, varying widely in their manifestations but of a similar general character. By comparing, analyzing, combining, and otherwise examining, we may continually cultivate our understanding of these just as we have done with our sense perceptions.

The most important difficulty connected with sensitiveness, but not an element of it, arises from the fact that the mental attitude is often distorted by allowing discordant thinking to follow experiences

which are not fully understood. Where we do not fully understand we too often let fear govern us, and we look for evil in all the dark places; instead, we should turn on the light so that we may know the true character of the information which comes to us through all avenues. Certain of these perceptions are held by some to be "warnings," and, if fear creeps in, the consequent discordant, and therefore disastrous, apprehensions which follow fear act upon the whole physical system and bring a host of evils along with them. There is great opportunity for such results, because sensitive persons are more easily injured than others — not by the "warnings," but by the greater intensity of their discordant thinking.

It should be distinctly noted that the suffering commonly attributed to sensitiveness does not come from that source nor from the perceptions which it confers, whatever they may be, but it does come solely from the discordant thinking which, through lack of mental control, is allowed to follow. Because of this entire separateness between sensitiveness and thinking, and because the suffering comes from discordant thinking and not from sensitiveness, the most keenly sensitive person may so train himself that he can stop his discordant thinking and thus

avoid all the injurious consequences which have been erroneously attributed to sensitiveness, and at the same time he may retain all the advantages which may be derived from it and its perception.

Though sensitiveness is never an evil nor a disadvantage in itself, yet thousands condemn it, condemn themselves for it, and are condemned by others because of it. Many excuse themselves and are excused by others for their erroneous conduct "because they are so sensitive"; and for the same reason still others are believed not to be responsible for that which it is supposed they cannot avoid. All this is wrong. Dr. Clifford Allbutt says truly: "The attributing of overexcitability to nerve structure in disease is absurd. No nervous matter was ever too excitable. To be excitable is its business. In overexcitability a race-horse differs from a jackass. The more excitable our nerves, the quicker and higher our life." [1]

If a person is mentally self-controlled, the greater his sensitiveness, the greater will be the advantages which he will derive therefrom, and by the proper cultivation of his thinking he may add largely to these advantages. Even that extreme degree which seems to result in disease is not an exception, because

[1] *System of Medicine*, Vol. VIII, p. 150.

the disease is the result of thinking and not of sensitiveness, and when the thinking which caused it is avoided, the disease will not appear, although the sensitiveness is in no degree diminished. Control of the thinking along these lines must be exercised most rigorously. The discordant thoughts which follow any perception must be dismissed abruptly and with a positiveness which will not allow their return. Because of his fear the sensitive person continually hesitates and often refrains from doing important things, thus directly impairing his efficiency and adding another kind of discordant thoughts to the stock already on hand. Fear is not sensitiveness, though the results of fear are very often mistakenly laid at its door. When the eye shows us a strange object, we dismiss any fear which may arise and investigate it. We ought to do the same when our consciousness of something new comes through any avenue of perception.

No one finds fault with his keen eyes which enable him to see further or more minutely than others do, though they may inform him of difficulties in the way. Instead of finding fault with the difficulties thus revealed, he rightly prides himself upon the possession of fine eyesight and delights in all the enjoyment and advantages which it brings. So

should each one congratulate himself, and be thankful for every avenue of information which he possesses.

The thoroughbred horse derives his valuable characteristics from his great sensitiveness, which enables him to do many things that other horses cannot do. In the hands of an incompetent driver he can easily be ruined, but in the care of a wise one he accomplishes wonders. The driver is the one to be blamed for any disaster, and not the horse. Just so it is with persons. The difficulty lies in their own lack of that wisdom which would enable them properly to control themselves. They allow their minds to run riot in discordant thinking of one kind or another, and in that way ruin themselves and bring distress to those around them, all the time erroneously blaming it upon their sensitiveness.

Let no one mistake for sensitiveness that which is born of selfishness, jealousy, envy, or egotism, for they have no connection whatever. The person who is always getting "hurt" by some fancied slight, some lack of appreciation or attention, should never hide behind the plea of being sensitive, but should face the truth squarely and recognize that jealousy and self-love — not self-respect — breed the thoughts which wreck his happiness.

Sensitiveness has been denounced as the bane of many a life. It has been charged with the ruin and death of untold thousands, and no one can measure the grief which has been laid at its door. And yet it was not sensitiveness that did all these things, but it was the discordant and erroneous thinking which its possessor allowed to riot through his mind. What has been supposed to be a curse is really a blessing. The curse is to be found in something else. Let each one dismiss discordant thoughts, emancipate himself from the condition of a victim, and become a victor, happy in the possession of such a desirable quality. Use it wisely, as every advantage should be used, for one's own benefit and for the benefit of others, and it will prove itself an invaluable servant.

XXXVI

SYMPATHY

MUCH is said in these days in praise of sympathy. For the purposes of definiteness and proper discrimination in the consideration of the subject it is desirable to have a clear understanding of the meaning of the word and its necessities and requirements. Literally it means feeling identical with that which another feels, and its meaning includes the condition of being affected by the feelings or emotions of another, whether they are of pleasure or of pain. Such sensitiveness as would enable one to perceive and understand the conditions, physical, emotional, and mental, of another is a necessity without which these results could not be attained. This includes more than mere external affairs and surroundings. There must not only be the ability to perceive and understand these, but also the ability to enter quite thoroughly and accurately into the whole situation and experiences of another; in other words, to put one's self exactly in another's place, see from his

point of view, and estimate conditions by his standard. All helpful sympathy depends from first to last upon a sensitiveness of perception and feeling which shall enable one clearly to see the condition of another, but with a self-control which shall permit him to do so without perturbation of spirit or any disturbed or disordered thought or feeling.

Next in order comes the mental action which follows this recognition of conditions. As in all other events, these two actions, the perception of the condition and the thoughts which succeed this perception, constitute the two essential elements of the activity; and it is as important that this mental action should be right as it is that the perception of conditions should be correct, because it is this mental action which causes, guides, and directs all that follows. It is in consequence of erroneous action here that most serious mistakes are made.

It is wholly wrong to allow these recognitions so to pervade one's being and so to absorb one's emotional nature as to unfit him for helpfulness, for the very object of all these mental conditions is to equip us so that we may assist one another. Indeed, that is one of the primal and important objects of life itself, and whatever hinders or injures efficiency in that direction is most clearly injurious and wrong.

The sight of a burn and one's consciousness of the pain it causes may be allowed to suggest thinking which shall so fill the person with keen and realistic feelings akin to the anguish of the sufferer as to exclude all else. This is sympathy; and it is made up of the consciousness of the situation, the mental actions which follow that consciousness, and the physical feelings which are caused by those mental actions. All this may be almost instantaneous, and so intense as to create physical conditions similar to those which were witnessed. This was the case of the mother who, on witnessing an accident to her child's hand, was herself so moved by the sight that her own hand was similarly injured, though it was untouched except by her own thinking. This is sympathy of the destructive kind. It is created and its character is decided by the thinking which follows the sight of the accident. The same thing is illustrated in the case of the surgeon. If he should allow his thoughts to run upon the fears of his patient, or if he should fill his mind with thoughts of the possible disastrous consequences of an accident in the course of the operation, he would wholly unfit himself for the work before him and prepare himself to make the fatal mistake.

That this is not exaggeration is seen in the almost

universal experience of a man learning to ride the bicycle. Unless he can take his mind off the object with which he is liable to collide and think of something else, the collision is certain despite the rider's most strenuous efforts.

Similar mental actions are seen in thousands of cases. Too often the sympathizer allows his mind to run on painful, discordant, or dangerous conditions to the exclusion of all else, literally filling himself with similar conditions and utterly destroying any possible efficiency in serviceable directions. Too many think that this is the essential whole of sympathy, and that those who fail in this are hard-hearted and unsympathetic. That is, they think that we must mourn with those who mourn, weep with those who weep, be angry with those who are angry, despair with those who despair; and so on through the whole list of inharmonious thoughts and emotions. Unfortunately there is a large class of sufferers who are never satisfied unless they receive this perverted and pernicious sympathy.

All this is a serious mistake because it is discordant, and discordant sympathy, like all other discord, always results in injury to all who entertain it; besides, the influence of mind upon mind is such that even though no expression is given to the dis-

turbing thoughts, yet both parties will be affected by them.

Why does the wise physician welcome one visitor to a patient and deny another? Because one manifests sympathy in a way that makes the sick person forget his pain and look cheerily out toward health with thoughts uplifted and hopes renewed. The other comes with pitying words and sorrowful looks — sympathetic to the last degree, but as depressing as a wet blanket. The welcome visitor is not wanting in sympathy, and his appreciation of the situation is as keen and comprehensive as that of the other, but he refuses to allow his own mind to be occupied with discordant thoughts. He has as much friendliness and affection for the sufferer as the other, but is prompted by these emotions instead of by his vision of the suffering. This is sympathy of the right kind. It is sympathy with the best in mankind instead of the worst, and it results in helpfulness instead of injury.

We have considered sympathy in its relation to suffering, but that is only one of its manifestations. In its broader field it touches upon all human activities, encouraging, cheering, and stimulating mankind, turning failure into success and defeat into victory. The sympathy of one strong, fearless

soul has strengthened many a fainting heart and has built the bridge over which many have crossed from despair to renewed hope and courage.

In the home, the schoolroom, in business and in social life, everywhere, it is sympathy that brings harmony and promotes happiness; but it must be of the right kind, for emotional sympathy uncontrolled by reason and discrimination, like an instrument badly out of tune, is disturbing and annoying.

This sympathy which has its root in sensitiveness, when rightly used, is the bond between persons, drawing them into the closest mutual relationship and enabling them to be the most to each other and to do the most for each other. Without it the world of human beings would be a mere collection or aggregation of integers with little more coherence than grains of sand on the seashore.

Humanity depends upon sympathy far more than it realizes and constantly receives it in unnoted ways. We do not understand why, but a sense of peace and strength comes as we look into some face seen perhaps for the first time; we hear a voice, and something within us responds in harmony. No one can measure its influence when this sympathy goes out from one whose soul is so filled with love

for all humanity that he has an ear for every heart-pulse that is beating.

It has been said that "next to love sympathy is the divinest passion of the human heart." It might well be said that true sympathy is born of that love which Jesus, the Christ, bade us have for one another — a love which helps always, which is pure in thought, and word, and deed; which seeks always to elevate and strengthen. Of such loving sympathy there can never be too much. It may be given full range, for its fruit is always harmony. It has helped thousands back to life, health, and happiness; while its opposite, born not of love, but of apprehension, fear, and all the mental imaginings of evil which enter into and create destructive sympathy, has hurled many other thousands toward destruction and death.

XXXVII

SUGGESTION

ANALYSIS of the elements of that relationship which exists between man and man shows that in its more subtle as well as in its more apparent activities suggestion plays an important and almost universal part. Who is there who has not over and over again responded joyously to the hearty laugh of a friend or been possessed by the opposite emotion in response to the sad face of grief, even of a stranger? This occurs though one may be ignorant of the cause of the laughter or of the tears, and it is the result of the suggestions conveyed by outward expressions. It operates not only through deeds, words, expressions of form and face, but also through the unspoken thought. The yawn that goes around the room in quick response to the unintended action of a single member of the company is full refutation of the assertion that suggestions do not have any effect. Even the best-poised and most self-controlled are not entirely free from their influence.

When undecided as to the course to be pursued a suggestion from another frequently becomes a turning-point to influence the decision. Men, looking for something which shall show them the way they ought to go, in their dilemma often seek such suggestions. The frequency of these occasions will be surprising to one who has never taken note of them. They are not aware that they are fostering a mental condition which will render them more susceptible to the influence, control, or even to the absolute domination of another. They think they exercise their own judgment in forming their conclusions when really they have been seeking something to influence that judgment and to aid them in their decision. This is correct enough if the final decision is really their own. It is right to seek information and advice from all sources, but at the last one should decide the issue independently and of one's self.

Every one is open to the suggestive influence of external things as well as to the personal and mental influence of others. This varies with character, temperament, and experience, at last turning chiefly on one's control of his thinking. Many are veered this way and that by very slight suggestion. This is especially noticeable in all weak characters, and

their susceptibility is the cause of their weakness; but even the self-reliant and strong are also largely influenced by friends and associates, and particularly by those whom they believe to be possessed of greater ability, experience, or wisdom. The difference is great between the weak hypnotic subject who stands at one end of the long line and the well-balanced, self-contained, and self-controlled person who stands at the other end; but the difference is small between any two who stand next each other in that line, and one may glide from one condition into the other by insensible degrees. Yet suggestions do not necessarily control, for every one has received many with which he has not complied, and this fact implies the possibility of complete self-control even under the most extreme conditions of suggestion.

Wise discretion is necessary on the part of those who would wield an influence for good, and this furnishes an additional reason for the exercise of rigorous mental control for the advantage of others as well as for one's own self. A recent writer exclaims: "How many thousands, nay millions, of poor souls all over the world will have their lives saddened by the drip of your tears who might have been gladdened by the sunlight of your smile!"

This may be poetic exaggeration, but after all who knows where the suggestive influence of a word, or look, or even an unexpressed but positive thought, shall cease? If "the fall of a pebble echoes throughout the farthest corridors of the universe," how much more may a thought!

It is unquestionably a disadvantage to tell another, whether acquaintance or otherwise, that he is "out at the elbows." The strong probability is that he knows it already, and an allusion to it will tend to rouse discordant thoughts in his mind and to intensify those already there, no one knows how much to his harm. It would be far wiser to arouse harmonious thinking with all its advantages by calling his attention to some of his desirable or praiseworthy qualities, or conditions, thereby encouraging, stimulating, and aiding him to overcome whatever is objectionable. These better conditions will not be difficult to find even in the worst possible person, especially if one has trained himself in the habit of seeking them. Advantages will as surely follow cheerful suggestions as harm will follow depressing ones.

It is being widely recognized that all this is of special value in health as well as in morals. The wise physician understands that it is his duty to

cultivate confidence and cheerfulness not only in his words but in the expression of his face, the tone of his voice, and his whole manner toward his patient.

Hudson says of disease induced by erroneous suggestion that it is safe to say that nine-tenths of all the ailments of the human family may be traced to this source.[1]

Albert Moll, who is good scientific authority on this topic, and who cannot be accused of exaggeration, says in his work on hypnotism: "There are few people who are not injured when they are assured on all sides that they look ill, and I think many have been as much injured by this cumulative process as if they had been poisoned."[2]

A single well-authenticated case of intentional suggestion will illustrate the disasters which may result. In one of the shops of a large manufacturing company a young man of vigorous health was subjected to the "practical jokes" of his fellow-workmen. One morning a half-dozen of them stationed themselves just out of sight of each other along the way he was to go to his daily work. The first one accosted him pleasantly with inquiries after his health and with various assertions that he was not looking well. To all this he responded accord-

[1] *The Evolution of the Soul*, p. 295. [2] *Hypnotism*, p. 357.

ing to the fact; he had enjoyed a good night's sleep, had eaten a hearty breakfast, and felt well in every way. To the suggestion that he must have a headache he answered in the negative. The next one he met had questions and statements like the first, only a little more positive in their character. To these he did not respond with so much confidence as at first. His positiveness decreased as each succeeding fellow-workman whom he encountered met him with stronger assurances of his ill health, until at last, by these repeated suggestions, he was really convinced that he was ill. On his arrival at the shop, instead of going to his work he went to the superintendent, asked for leave because of sickness, went home, and was sick in bed two weeks under the care of a physician. Of course the adept in mental self-control would avoid all this by refusing to allow the presence in his mind of the discordant thoughts which had been suggested.

But it is not alone among the joking workmen of the shops that this sort of thing occurs. Dr. Arthur T. Schofield narrates the following: "Two medical men were walking together, and one was saying that he could make a man ill by merely talking to him. The other doubted this. So, seeing a laborer in a field, the first speaker went up to him and, telling

him he did not like his appearance, proceeded to diagnose some grave disease. The man was profoundly struck, left off work soon after, feeling very ill, took to his bed, and in a week died; no sufficient physical cause being found." [1]

In an article on hypnotism, which is only an extreme form of suggestion, is governed by similar fundamental principles, acts through similar mental methods, and differs from it more in its completeness than otherwise, Dr. Menard sets forth the injurious effects and possibilities of suggestion. He says: "When a subject is in the state of hypnosis, his mind accepts without control the ideas that are suggested to him, and these ideas are translated into actions. . . . The subject who is persuaded that he cannot raise his arm, open his eyes, rise from his chair, or cross a threshold, really experiences those forms of paralysis. He cannot move, because he is convinced of the impossibility of movement. In hypnosis, with or without sleep, if you give your subject a glass of water to drink, telling him it is a strong purgative, he will experience its effect, as if it had been so really. . . .

"*The idea need not have been introduced into the mind during hypnosis and by another person; it*

[1] *The Force of Mind; or, the Mental Factor in Medicine*, p. 96.

may spring up in the mind in an apparently spontaneous fashion, following a strong emotion due to the erroneous interpretation of a special sensation. The individual who believes himself ill is really so; he is not an imaginary sick man, but a man who is sick because of his imagination. He may, as in hypnotic experiments, be dyspeptic or paralyzed or drunk by auto-suggestion. . . . A conscious or subconscious fixed idea is the cause of the whole trouble." [1]

In other words, the change of the mind — whether that change occurs in consequence of the silent dictum of the hypnotist, or in response to the verbal suggestion of a friend, or because of a suggestion received from some external action or condition, or even in the course of one's own thinking and from one's own conclusions — really produces in the physical structure those conditions which have been taken note of and accepted by the mind as real; and this occurs wholly regardless of the fact that those conditions did not have any existence outside of the thinker's own mentality.

What a wrong it is, then, even though with the best intentions, to say to a person sitting by an open window, "Aren't you afraid you will take cold?"

[1] *Cosmos* (Paris), June 4, 1904.

The more earnest the speaker, the more surely will the injury be inflicted. According to Dr. Menard, the cold is far more liable to be caused by the suggestion than by the exposure, and therefore the suggestion is the more dangerous of the two. How often at the table is heard the remark, "I am afraid that will hurt you." This habit persistently followed is more certain to cause injury than any kind of injurious food. The same is true of a thousand similar well-meant cautions which any one can recall from his own experience.

The number of cases is innumerable where careful, anxious, painstaking, and conscientious mothers, by their needless caution and care-taking, and by their persistent suggestions of danger from cold, wet feet, drafts, overexertion, and the thousand and one other things which overanxiety presents to their minds, have planted inability, effeminacy, decay, disease, misery, and even death in the minds and bodies of the children they love so well and care for so anxiously. Similar error is wrought, not alone by mothers, but by relatives, friends, acquaintances, and incidental associates through their well-meant but erroneous cautions, which are really suggestions of impending evil. Herein is at least one reason why the children of the poor are so often more vigorous,

hardy, and healthy than those of the wealthy. These mothers have something else to do besides to suggest evils to their children, and they do not have time to educate them into disease, so the children escape the infliction and are happier all their lives.

Two things are worthy of note in this connection. One is that the principle will work both ways. If, as Menard says, change of mind will produce these ills, a change of mind to the contrary direction will cure them when once contracted. A guest who was a confirmed dyspeptic and afraid to eat any but the simplest food, was encouraged by his hostess, who assured him with much positiveness that no one was ever injured by anything eaten at her table. He yielded to her suggestion, ate a good meal, partaking of several articles of food which he had thought were harmful, and was not injured. This experience so changed his mind that he lost his fear, continued to eat, and his dyspepsia of years' standing was cured. Numerous similar instances of helpful suggestion might be given.

The other point worthy of note is that if one has so trained his mind as to exclude the harmful suggestion, never allowing lodgement of the noxious mental seed, he will have complete immunity from

all such harm. But to do this in the face of the persistent endeavors of the "calamity howlers" necessitates both skill and tact, because no class of a community is more thoroughly convinced that they are right, and none more sincere and persistent in their well-meant but pernicious endeavors. Their motive is right. It is their method that is wrong. They thoroughly believe all that they say, really are solicitous for the welfare of their friends, and often are greatly disturbed if their suggestions are not heeded. These suggestions would soon cease if one would keep his own mind steadily poised and admit no discordant thoughts.

Of the same class are those who pursue a similar course toward their friends in the sick room, and toward those who complain of sickness in any degree. They commiserate them, tell them how badly they look, "sympathize" with them with the "sympathy" which destroys, and enlarge upon the more serious phases of their disease. These people seem happy when they can tell one who is ill about the extreme suffering of others in a like condition; and if they know of some one who has died of a similar disease they retail all the particulars to the sufferer who lies there at their mercy. This kind of consolation for the sick has a wonderful fascination for

those who indulge in it, and they think themselves comforters, but in reality they are human vampires.

Such a habit indicates unhealthy, morbid mental conditions. Its viciousness need not be enlarged upon, but it cannot be too strongly condemned. No one should need even a hint that he ought to avoid all such suggestions of evil either to the sick or to the well. Yet large numbers who recognize the correctness of the general position here set forth thoughtlessly indulge themselves in the vice, for vice it is. What more can be said to influence such persons to better ways? A multitude of publications set forth the evils which such a course entails, but it is worth another effort if even a single person is restrained by these words.

Looked at from one point of view, such suggestions are little short of criminal. We are eager to stop the career of him who robs another of his material possessions, and he who poisons another's food is held to be a murderer, yet people go on poisoning the minds of their associates and robbing them of their birthright of health and happiness, and no one is held accountable. If it were possible, there ought to be a law prohibiting such suggestions, with due penalties for their utterance; but, better

still, each one may make such a law for himself and then obey it.

If we desire habitually to scatter sunshine and health among our fellows wherever we meet them, not only our deeds and words, but our facial expressions and our thoughts themselves, must be well controlled and cheerful. If the right mental habits are established, all the external expressions will take care of themselves without attention or effort, and our presence alone will carry suggestions of gladness wherever we go.

XXXVIII

HYPNOTIC CONTROL

THERE is a broad and well-recognized sphere of personal influence which, though widely discussed, is not fully understood, and extremely conflicting opinions are held about it. It assumes a multitude of forms, sometimes exerts very positive control over others, and is the result of peculiar conditions which in some of their phases have received a very large amount of systematic investigation, though the investigators have not reached an absolute agreement among themselves.

Students of these phenomena, whether or not they accept the more extreme doctrines of telepathy, sooner or later become convinced that there is some means of communicating thoughts and mental conditions other than the more apparent methods of speech, facial expression, gesture, and other action. Some deny that these expressions exist except as figments of imagination; but the strong tendency of scientific investigation is toward the opinion expressed

by a recent writer, "that thoughts pass in their own subtle, silent way from mind to mind, and that no man can think, however secretly, without spreading the influence of his thought into the minds around him."

Open as most of us are to the influence of verbal suggestion, there is something more subtle which may control us without our being aware of it. This particular phase of personal influence finds its most extreme and perhaps its worst form in what has been called by the various names of mesmerism, animal magnetism, and more recently hypnotism. According to later authorities it is suggestion by means of either the vocalized or unvocalized thinking which controls the hypnotized person. We have no means of knowing how often this is the case in ordinary life when there is no intention to hypnotize and where none of its formalities are used. Through it one mind may control another with more or less of an approach toward an absoluteness which is sometimes complete, and it is an important question whether there is a defence against these varied suggestive influences in any or all of their manifold forms.

The mental habit of the vast majority of mankind is to follow any suggestion that presents itself with-

out much direct control of one's own thinking unless the subject is widely outside the ordinary track. Random thinking is the rule with some persons, whether it be merely aimless revery; the more or less ecstatic drift of thought set up by sensuous surroundings of various kinds, as light, color, or sound; the self-suggested mental action arising from the memory of some past experience; the suggestive word, or even the mere presence of another person. These mental activities may be either pleasant to the extent of intoxication or uncomfortable to the extent of acute pain and distress; all of them are injurious, and their indulgence is a worse than useless waste of time.

It appears most remarkable that no worse consequences have followed uncontrolled, aimless, objectless, haphazard, random mental action. Fortunately, not all thinking is of this kind; and, fortunately for the good of the race, more often than otherwise the general tendency of this unguided thinking is toward more desirable things, because every man is really seeking that which he considers an improvement over his present condition or attainment, and his thinking follows his strongest inclination without any intentional control. But the person who has really assumed full control of his

thinking and maintains it stands on a pedestal which cannot be shaken. He guides his thoughts where he will and can bid defiance to suggestions of every kind. He is consciously himself, and not a weather-vane to be veered about by every breath of influence.

The prominent characteristic of the fully developed hypnotic state is a condition wherein the normal mental powers are either dulled, suspended, or in a state of abeyance, so that the mind accepts without inquiry any statement and obeys without objection any command suggested to it or thrust upon it. Hence, the man's thinking being controlled, his actions are controlled also. This is the last step in personal influence. A man in this condition is no longer free, because in abandoning the control of his mind he has surrendered his freedom. He is so completely the slave of another that he is no longer himself, but is merely a machine, an automaton, a puppet, acting solely by another's guidance and without any initiative, choice, or will of his own.

Such abandonment of one's self to the control of another cannot be anything but criminal on the part of the one who purposely permits it, and also on the part of the one who induces the condition. Suicide may be worse, but this is temporary suicide, for the

man has allowed his own self to become inactive, and for the time he is dead. The worst result of it all is that this condition may be continued even into his "waking moments," so that a long time after the hypnotic state is supposed to have ceased, his actions are sometimes controlled by the suggestions received during his hypnotic condition. In view of these acknowledged post-hypnotic actions of the victims it is impossible for any one to tell how far into the future this influence may extend nor how inclusive it may be.

This hypnotic condition and its results are possible only when a person has habitually allowed his mind to follow in any direction toward which external circumstances pointed, and has thus made himself an easy prey for the hypnotist, who depends for his success upon his ability to control the thinking of his subject. Self-control and its abandonment are exact opposites, and both cannot exist at the same time in one person. The contrast between them indicates at once the advantage of one and the disadvantage of the other. If mental self-control is desirable, then it should be constantly maintained and ought never to be weakened by indulgence in its opposite. In the mental condition which will result from exercising the control advocated in these

pages, every suggestion, regardless of its source, whether mental or otherwise, will be examined and the kind and character of the thinking which shall follow will be decided upon by the thinker himself in compliance with his own understanding, choice, or judgment. If a person purposely controls his thinking at all times until the habit is well established, then the habit itself, without conscious effort, will work in the same direction. The mental action of such a person is always within his own personal volition and is controlled absolutely by himself; therefore hypnotic suggestion has no power over him, and he possesses complete immunity from all such influence.

The man who has habituated himself to supremacy over his own thinking is not only uncontrolled by the external suggestions of which he is aware, but also by those more subtle ones of which he may not be conscious, because his own mental action of which he is not conscious is so dominated by this habit of self-control that the thinking of others cannot influence him. This means that the power of habit may be so strong that even a man's mental action of which he is not aware is, unconsciously to himself, wholly in abeyance to his own choice. Such a man is free.

Here is not only efficient protection against all hypnotic or mesmeric intrusion, but also against all forms of improper or injurious external personal influences of every kind whatever. He who controls his own thoughts lives in his own castle, which may be absolutely impregnable against assault from within or without, whether insidious or open, whether mild or violent. God means it to be so. The man who does not thus have mastery of himself is short of his own stature. The physically strong may feel no self-confidence unless to their physical strength they have added control of their thinking. Neither need the physically weak be frightened because of their weakness, for neither physical strength nor weakness is a factor in the case. Without the exercise of any physical strength whatever, each may maintain perfect mental control, thus insuring absolute freedom to himself.

XXXIX

ENVIRONMENT

It is generally believed that man is to a very large extent, if not wholly, subject to his environment, mentally and physically the creature of external circumstances or conditions and their suggestions. While it is substantially true that in man's present state, the stimulus from environment largely decides his course and development, yet a little attention to the statement of basic principles herein set forth will show that this submission is not necessary, and that man may become independent of environment and largely if not completely its master. An examination of historic conditions should convince the most sceptical that too much importance has been attributed to the influence of man's surroundings.

The influence of climate has been held to be largely the reason for the various conditions of human beings in different localities, but it was not a change in climatic conditions which caused the

changes in the character of the inhabitants of England. The climate of that country is now substantially what it was centuries ago, and if it has changed at all, that change is vastly less than the changes in the character of the people. Does some one say this is a case of development? Very true; but that development is the result of a mental change, and not of any change in environment except such as the changes in thinking have produced.

Changes of thinking have created the differences between the conditions of the inhabitants of Europe before the time of the Cæsars and their condition to-day, but not change of climate nor any other change in their natural environment. In many points they have demonstrated their superiority over environment, and by artificial means they have modified environment itself. This is true of all Europe.

Look at the varying stages of progress in the different epochs of Greece and Rome — in their earlier days, in the zenith of their prosperity, in the degradation of their downfall, and in these modern times — each stands out distinct from either of the others. It was changes of thought which wrought the revolutions — not changes of environment.

The Egypt of the Pharaohs had the same sun and air, the same soil and water, that she has to-day, but what are her rulers and people now compared with those of the ancient centuries! In the days of their glory their environment was the same as to-day, but the thoughts of that period have been lost. The change that is now going on in that country is not due to climate, but to ideas. Babylonia and Assyria need only to be named as further examples.

The American Indians had inhabited this continent for centuries, but they did not develop along the same lines as the white men who thrust themselves into that environment; yet the climate and soil remain practically the same. Changes of environment have been made by the new inhabitants, but not changes in the characteristics of the inhabitants by the environment. All the differences here are clearly the result of a change of the inhabitants, bringing different thoughts, ambitions, and aspirations, and these are at the foundation of the new development.

In the great southwest of the United States a second change of inhabitants has taken place. That region was settled by the Spanish earlier than was New England. Its first change in condition was distinctly along certain lines of thinking pe-

culiar to the Spaniard. The last seventy-five years have seen all that revolutionized, not by change of climate, but by the introduction of another people with other characteristics of thought. The climate did not make the changes nor create either of these three kinds of civilization. That was done by thinking alone, and by the actions which that thinking necessitated. The climate is the same that it has been from earliest history, but, by the domination of a new set of ideas over the environment, even the face of nature has been changed.

It is true that the environment of man in America is very largely different from what it was when Columbus discovered the continent, but man has made those changes in response to the demands of his own thinking. He has modified temperature by erecting houses and providing facilities for warming them. He has modified atmospheric conditions by cutting down trees, constructing irrigating canals, and cultivating the soil. These changes were caused by artificial means in obedience to the mind of man. Nature did none of it except in response to man's action.

When properly considered, history shows that mind modifies, changes, and controls with less regard to external conditions than is usually supposed.

Admit that in the extremes of heat and cold, of fertility and barrenness, environment dominates; but even these have been to a large extent modified and overcome by what mind has done. The arid plains of Arizona and New Mexico, like those of Babylonia and Assyria, were once fertile fields made so by irrigation, while what were once deserts of our own great West are fast becoming fertile fields.

The case is plain. The facts of history already cited apply to the entire environment as well as to each incident or condition of it. Thinking is the initial action, the antecedent and cause of all human actions. Between any external condition or incident and the bodily action which follows stands the person's own thinking. Not the external condition or occurrence, but the thinking, determines what the bodily action shall be and its entire character. This thinking, as has so often been said, may be entirely within man's control; therefore he himself, and not his environment, is responsible for the results, be they good or bad.

Men say that certain circumstances force themselves upon them and make certain lines of conduct necessary; and this declaration appears to be true, but that is because they allow it to be so. Whatever seems to force man out of his way might have

been overcome by appropriate mental action, and the difficulty might have been obviated.

The whole world is trying to excuse itself for many of its failures, evil conditions, and actions by charging the responsibility to environment. The blame is attributed to everything contiguous — not alone to persons, but animals, insensible things, and the most trivial conditions. Nothing is entirely exempt. The weather comes in for a large share, and even the stars are held responsible for our wrongdoing.

It is true that the external incident or condition serves to set in motion certain trains of thought, and these vary in different persons in exact accordance with their varying opinions and habits of thinking, but one is not necessarily subject to these thoughts. He can control them; and, furthermore, a man who has learned to exercise this control can instantly separate the wheat from the tares in his mental kingdom, and discard whatever is worthless or harmful. It is all under his own control.

This is self-activity, and Harris well says: "Self-activity is essentially different from relative and dependent being, because it does not receive its determinations from its environment, but originates them itself in the form of feelings, volitions, and

thoughts."[1] All activity other than self-activity may be discarded, and man may thus free himself from the thraldom of environment. No man is ever forced into any course of conduct, though he may fall into it by allowing a change in his thinking.

If this statement of the principle is correct, then the external suggestion, condition, incident, or thing does not decide what a man's action shall be except as he allows it to do so; neither do any one nor all of those things which surround him necessarily give any more than merely incidental tone or direction to his actions. Mind is supreme, even over itself, in that it determines its own activities.

It is not the thing without, but the thought within, which injures. The dyspeptic sitting at the table loaded with viands is not injured by the food he does not eat. Poison does not kill unless it is swallowed and absorbed. The thought suggested by the word one hears or the action one sees — that is, by the environment — does not injure unless it finds lodgement within a person's own mind. Whether it finds such lodgement or not depends upon the hearer and not upon the speaker. The speaker's words may be entirely without influence upon the hearer, they may not even be consciously audible,

[1] *Psychologic Foundations of Education*, p. 4.

and this is decided by the hearer's own course of thinking. Each man is impervious to another's thoughts and uninfluenced by them until he allows his own thoughts to go the same way. The choice is his own, and that choice decides his action.

It makes no difference what knowledge one may have of the underlying principles and methods of any course of action, nor how good one's sentiments and intentions may be, if he does not take advantage of every opportunity to use those principles and methods in the practical application of them to existent conditions. Nor will anything be accomplished by the casual thought which occupies the mind for an instant only, nor by the forced thought which is held for a brief time in contradiction to the settled conviction. Such thinking is but slightly operative, because of its light and transitory character. It is the habitual, determined thinking arising out of settled convictions and opinions which brings results.

By this persistence in right thinking man may rise so superior to his environment that it shall not injure him. This is seen in a thousand small ways, all of which point to the larger possibilities which are within reach, and these to others still beyond. One person's mental attitude toward the

weather is such that changes of temperature, drafts, wet feet, damp clothing, and a thousand other minor conditions bring illness of more or less severe character, while another goes through them all with absolute impunity. One person will remain out in the storm of wind, or rain, or snow, wet to the skin, and suffer no inconvenience, while another who has to cross a damp floor must put on overshoes or risk a cold or influenza. That these are the results of mental conditions is proven by the fact that multitudes of people have emancipated themselves from this servitude by a change of mental habit which they have themselves purposely brought about. If one person can do this, another can; and if it can be done in the lesser conditions, it can in the greater also, and so on and on in greater still, without limit.

It is not claimed that all physical occurrences are now within man's control. The rock falls on a man and crushes him. The fire burns him. The frost freezes him. The water drowns him. He has submitted himself to the influences of the adverse forces of nature in minor particulars until, in these extreme conditions, they dominate him utterly. But it has been shown by actual experiment that he is their master within a certain range

of circumstances, and that he may still further extend the scope of his control. In the light of the things which have already been accomplished it becomes evident that man shall yet so understand the power of mind and the principles on which it acts as to assume control over all environment, and thus place himself in the position set forth in the story of his creation as we find it in the first chapter of Genesis, wherein he is given dominion over all the things of the earth.[1]

Who dares to say what the conditions will be when all men, as is their right, assume absolute control of their thinking? It rests with man himself to decide whether he will continue to be the creature of his surroundings, moulded and shaped and directed by them, or will become absolutely superior to the physical world about him. This is a reversal of present and past opinions, but when accurate reasoning is applied to the principles which govern the actions of mankind, a possibility of achievement in overcoming what are now thought to be dominating external conditions will be opened to view, such as the wildest visionaries of human progress have hardly dared to contemplate. This is to be the special work of the twentieth century.

[1] Genesis i. 26.

XL

EACH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIMSELF

THE doctrine that in the present social conditions the innocent very often suffer because of the acts of the vicious and guilty is widely, if not universally, accepted as true, though always accompanied by a keen sense of its injustice. The proposition under present consideration approaches this doctrine from a different point of view. Correct reasoning must rest upon accurate statements of principle, and must be followed out with logical accuracy and in exact compliance with such statements, else the conclusion will be erroneous. The conclusions reached by this exact reasoning may be in direct contradiction to all sense perceptions; they may even be, seemingly, beyond belief; but this does not in any degree affect their accuracy. In every advance made in the interpretation of the principles of truth there has been heard the cry: "This is an hard saying; who can bear it?"

We have seen that thinking is the first action

arising from a person's consciousness of an external incident or condition, and that, whatever its form or intensity, it may be so perfectly under the thinker's control that he may stop it instantly in any stage of its progress, and substitute in its place that which is wholly different in character and tendency. We have seen that in every case the actions which follow take their character from the thinking; therefore those actions, like the thoughts which produce them, are one's own. Thus the resultant actions and conditions are shaped and directed by the person himself. This places the responsibility for all one's actions and conditions, as well as for their consequences, wholly upon the actor himself, and prevents him from justly shifting the responsibility upon any one else.

The fact that men do not control their thinking does not change the basic proposition, nor the reasoning which has been applied to it, nor the conclusions arrived at, and therefore does not shift the responsibility. Men can change their thinking if they choose. Whatever the course pursued, it is one's own act in every case. The man who sees the coming locomotive and does not get out of the way is just as responsible for the events which follow as the man who chooses to throw himself in front of

it. Neither of them can rightly charge the blame upon the engineer. What happens to the man is the consequence of his own course, because his own thinking and his consequent acting stood between the sight of the on-rushing engine and the result; had his thinking and actions been different, the results would have been different also.

It may be true that at the time of his thinking the man was ignorant of some essential condition. Ignorance is very often a most important factor in a train of circumstances, but it does not modify the foregoing position, because it still remains that in either condition, with or without the ignorance, the action or the failure to act is the thinker's own. Even his ignorance is probably the result of his own course at some previous time. The engineer is never held responsible on the ground that the man crossing the track just around the curve did not know the train was coming. The legal maxim, old as law itself, "Ignorance of the law excuses no man," is an illustration of the principle, and it applies here as well as in purely legal affairs. Indeed, it would not apply there if it were not universally true.

Much time and many circumstances may intervene between the thinking and its final and objectionable

results; and though that fact may increase the difficulty of discovering the erroneous thought which was really the cause, yet this does not change the principle nor its application, nor does it shift the responsibility. It only emphasizes the necessity for the correct solution of each particular problem at the time it arises.

It may be urged that by the law of heredity the "sins of the fathers are visited upon their children." Let it be granted that this is so, and that the born cripple is not himself the cause of his own suffering, nor that the infant starving because of a drunken parent brought its miseries upon itself — indeed, let it be granted that a very large share if not all the suffering which comes to children before they have arrived at the age of responsibility is caused by another, and that they are not responsible for it — yet these facts are exceptions, and the conditions are exceptional. Even if the law of heredity holds, the principle also holds that their condition is the result of thinking, though it may be the thinking of their ancestors. The thinking of the child begins very early and increases rapidly, and so far as his thinking is his own the responsibility for it is his own also, so that when he has arrived at maturity he is himself responsible for all those

sufferings which arise from his erroneous thinking. That he has not been educated in the principles of thought control and is therefore ignorant of them is his misfortune, but it in no way relieves him of his responsibility. Whatever tendencies a man may have had at his birth, it is always within his power afterward to change those tendencies by a change of thinking.

A proof of this position is seen in the fact that most of the really great heroes and reformers of the world have come from what is called "the lower orders." Jesus himself was not an exception. He had few or none of those advantages of association, education, training, and the like, which are supposed to aid a man in his career. These were possessed by the scribes, Pharisees, and priests; but those men did not institute any reform, though they were all the time trying to amend the ways of individuals and of society, and were the custodians of the social and moral welfare of their day and time. Jesus had never been taught in the schools; he was not even from "the leading classes of society"; yet he leads the world. He was not a priest educated in any religion; yet he enunciated principles which are changing and will continue to change the religion and morals of the entire world until

it shall conform to his teaching. Is it urged that he possessed supernatural ability? The career of Mahomet was similar in these respects, and did he have the aid of the supernatural? "Out of the ranks" have the great reformers come.

Since the earliest days man has attributed his own errors, failures, disasters, and crimes to what some one else has done or has failed to do. The almost universal desire to throw the blame for one's own conduct upon another seems to be a characteristic of human nature, and this error has provoked a vast amount of wrong thinking by which even the error itself has been maintained and perpetuated.

The suffering of the good wife is very often attributed to the wrong actions of the erring husband; but it was her own thinking which brought her to her present situation. We have seen clearly that it is neither surrounding circumstances nor the acts of another, but our own thinking, which produces both bodily and mental conditions. Her husband may be a drunkard; and years ago she may have thought, as many girls do, that there is no harm in an occasional glass, or even that to take it is a praiseworthy exhibition of manly freedom. She suffers from his neglect or even

from his blows because through her erroneous thinking, perhaps only yesterday, perhaps years ago, she placed herself in a position which gave him the opportunity. If she had thought differently, her course would have been different, and the evil that followed would never have resulted.

But the case is even stronger than this. Though the husband has done the worst things possible, yet her suffering is from her own thoughts alone, because that is the order of nature. She had the power to change her thinking and exclude discordant thoughts from her mind about him and his acts, and to have done this would have changed her whole succeeding course and condition, both mentally and physically. The mental pain does not follow unless there is permitted in one's own self the mental cause for it, neither does the physical pain follow the blow unless the mental discord occurs also. This is the ultimate position, and it is the correct one.

Because of lifelong habit, the strong tendency in such cases is to brood over the unfortunate conditions and mentally to blame and to condemn the erring husband and to expect nothing better from him. In this way love soon dies out of the heart, and bitterness takes its place. If, instead, the wife

will train herself to keep her mind free from criticism and condemnation, to fill it with thoughts of whatever good she has recognized in her husband, and persistently to hold fast to her faith that he will turn back to the right and assert his manhood, she will not only change her own condition, but in time will reap her reward in the reformation of her husband. As it was with the teacher in a small thing so will it be with her in large things. The law which governs the falling pebble is the same law which controls the motion of the earth. She should eliminate the discordant thoughts from her own mind and substitute harmonious ones in their places, and in exactly the same degree in which she accomplishes this change in herself will be the change for the better in her husband. An easy task? No; but was anything worth while ever accomplished without strenuous, persistent effort?

Because few are willing to undertake the mental training necessary to accomplish this result does not change the fact. Electricity is the same to-day that it has been in all preceding centuries, but it is not the fault of electricity that men have not used it.

The principle here set forth does not in any case exonerate the one who does the wrong. The liar,

the thief, the murderer, and every one who does any evil whatsoever is himself wholly responsible for what he does and can in no way escape the consequences of his acts. Whatever responsibility belongs to his victim is no excuse for the one who inflicts the wrong. Each alike ought to avoid his own causative acts, and thus he will avoid their consequences. Each is a sufferer; and his suffering is from his own hand, and upon his own head, and is the consequence of his own acts.

Is this a hard doctrine? No, it is not, because at the same time that it irrevocably fixes the responsibility it shows how the error and the suffering may be avoided. That the principle is unchangeable is its virtue, and not its defect. Twice two is always four, and *principle always acts in the same way whether in mathematics or in morals.* It only remains for man to recognize the principle and act in compliance with it.

The conditions are the same, even in the supreme illustration of all, which is here approached with reverence. It is said that the sinless Jesus suffered for the sins of a guilty world, and in one view of the event this is true. In another it is wholly untrue. His whole course, including its culmination, was the result of his own action — of his own

thinking — indeed, of his own deliberate choice. The temptation in the wilderness indicates clearly that he then recognized the conditions and saw that he might make himself the dictator of the world instead of becoming the victim of the prejudices of men. His public entry into Jerusalem, only a week before his crucifixion, shows that it was not even then too late to change his course, save himself from the cross, and become the political ruler of Judea and of the world; and some of the recorded events indicate that he understood this clearly, yet he deliberately chose what he would do. Later still, at the time of his arrest, when he directed that all forcible opposition should cease, he showed that he was following the course he had mentally decided upon beforehand; and even then he might have reversed all the subsequent proceedings, for he said to Peter: "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" The evidence is incontestable that he could have avoided the crucifixion. Instead, he chose it! Then he was responsible for the consequences. When we think beyond the cross, as we can do now, and think on the tremendous results for good which followed his choice, made with full knowledge of

the consequences to himself, we may well be overwhelmed with awe.

This view does not detract in the least from its impressiveness. On the contrary, the fact that it was done with full knowledge of the conditions and of the more immediate results, as well as with the ability to avoid them, and therefore that it was purely voluntary on his part and an act for which, so far as he was concerned, he was himself wholly responsible, only adds to its sublimity and majesty. It was his slayers who knew not what they did, and the true character of their action, in so far as it related to themselves and to their responsibility for it, was not changed by what he did. And yet, the act was not in one slightest degree the less efficacious for the benefit of ignorant, blind, struggling, sinful mankind. HE *did it for* THEM.

For ages men have been prone to charge their sufferings to "the anger of the gods," or to "the inscrutable purposes of divine Providence," or to "the will of the Lord." It has been demonstrated in the preceding pages that, in each particular case, as well as when viewed from the larger standpoint of the whole, these ills are the results of one's own thinking and consequent doing. Then to charge God with them is wholly false. God did

not create our troubles nor did He inflict them upon us, nor did He make our erroneous thinking necessary. It is nothing short of direct blasphemy to charge God with our ills. They are the results of our own wrongdoing. He made each man free to think or not to think as he chooses. God is good; and He is not responsible, either directly or indirectly, for any ill, or evil thing, least of all for the mistakes and sins of mankind, nor for their consequent woes. The briefest consideration of acknowledged psychological principles will refute all such erroneous allegations against a loving Father.

Man is meant for happiness, and that happiness is within his reach. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" indeed, and man may dwell therein if he will. Joy, pleasure, peace, are all the results of right thinking, and there is no reason why every one may not have them. The truth, the beauty, the grandeur, the inspiration, the unspeakable happiness, are for every man and are obtainable by him. He does not need even to search for bliss; it comes of itself as God made it to come.

XLI

THOUGHT CONTROL IS THE TRUE SELF-CONTROL

SELF-CONTROL has been lauded by philosophers, moralists, and teachers ever since the earliest dawn of civilization. Solomon is reported to have said thousands of years ago: "He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." Perhaps this saying was old even in his day, and was only a repetition or an echo of what some other sage had long before expressed. Certainly the greatest ruler of men is the man who rules himself, for a man cannot successfully rule others unless he also rules himself. "Self-mastery is the greatest task to which man has ever set his hand." Every earnest, sincere soul has attempted it and has experienced both success and defeat.

The first step toward accomplishing any object is to know how. The principles under consideration point clearly to the only method of attaining complete self-control. Its secret lies in control of the thinking, because mental actions originate and

control all others. In the words, "Control the mind," is condensed all the wisdom, all the philosophy, and all the counsel which has ever been given in any effort to help mankind to acquire self-control. Therein is the root of the whole matter, because mind is the supreme power in man, and if the mind is controlled, it will control all the rest.

Any course which does not include mental control does not constitute full self-control, because in that case the most important factor in human life is ignored. This fact is not widely recognized, or if recognized, it is not appreciated, for if men understood the importance of thinking as the source of all other actions, they would perceive this great secret of all true self-control.

Few ethical teachers pay much attention to this point, overlooking it almost entirely in the care given to the control of external actions. They counsel the avoidance of erroneous acts and immoral deeds and call that self-control; as, when one is angry they advise that he should not hit his adversary with his fist nor abuse him with his tongue. Of course in this there is a fragment of self-control which is vastly better than to let the passions have full sway in the actions.

The angry man who does not do the wrong deed

which his thoughts prompt is acting in a praiseworthy manner; but that is neither the best nor the most efficient method, for it leaves undone the most important part of the work. It is control of only the physical part of the self, while the mental goes on without attention; this is repression, but repression is not true control. The thoughts and impulses of such a man have to be restrained, kept back, and resisted, even in their violence. To have cast these thoughts out of the mind or to have destroyed them at once would have been to go to the fountain head of all activity and withdraw the poison that was polluting the stream. It would have been to remove the obstructions which had changed the direction of the stream, and which had turned it into wrong channels. This would have been true self-control, because control of the whole, and it would have left the stream to go freely on its own right way.

True self-control does not consist in restraining or resisting the action which is wrong, but it does consist in doing that which removes all appearance of necessity for resistance or restraint. It is not muscular control, nor control of the will; but it is control of that thinking which is anterior to will, and which creates both choice and will. In this

method the will is not busied strenuously holding something in check; but choice discards discordant thoughts — drops them out of mind — and the whole work is accomplished. One method is merely the act of choice; the other requires the vigorous, perhaps strenuous, exercise of will power. One soon releases the attention and becomes restful; the other demands constant attention and exhausts the energy. One is effective without weariness; the other is exhaustive and always results in some sort of failure, often in disaster.

If discordant thinking is given free course without more or less resistance or repression, control of the actions sooner or later becomes impossible, for such thoughts will ultimately do their work in one way or another. The boiler which does not furnish opportunity for escape of the steam must burst if the fire is kept up, but it does not need a skilled engineer to pull the fire out of the fire-box, and then explosion is impossible. Any man can do that; neither is the learning of the schools necessary to enable a man to stop his discordant thinking and thus save himself from its disastrous consequences. The simplest and humblest man in all the world can accomplish that if he chooses to do so.

Self-control in its completeness is really emanci-

pation from the control of all other things than self; that is, it is emancipation from the domination of all those things which provoke discordant thinking. The man who allows himself to be mentally disturbed is really, to the extent of that disturbance, under the control of whatever suggested it, however entirely he may fail to recognize his condition. To practise the principle herein discussed releases him from the control of circumstances, conditions, and all those tendencies within and without which have before held him in thraldom. It frees him from everything except the necessity of controlling himself.

As already shown, this mental training will establish such habits that no attention need be given even to this control of self, because when the habit of any class of mental actions is once set up, they move on automatically, at least without any conscious care or attention, as those thoughts do which direct the pen in forming the letters when one is writing. That would be freedom from all control, even from self-control. The whole of this essay only shows that, when it is complete, "self-control," at last analysis, is a misnomer, because when one has accomplished it, he is released from even the control of himself.

But the question may be asked, would not such freedom result in wrong actions? The answer is that under the conditions which are necessary for the attainment of such freedom wrong actions would be impossible, because when one has reached this freedom he would have arrived at such an understanding, and would have set up such mental habits based on that understanding, that there would no longer be any inclination toward wrong. Then error would no longer disturb the mind, because all of it would have been cast out with the erroneous or discordant thinking. Thus perfect self-control would result in the absence of all control whatever, because of the absence from the mind of everything that would need to be controlled.

This is the freedom of untrammelled childhood. It is the freedom of heaven. As a man approximates toward this ideal he departs from error and approaches truth, right, and perfect freedom.

XLII

MAN THE ARCHITECT OF HIMSELF

It has been shown in the preceding pages that man is the creature of his own thinking, moulded and fashioned by it, and that if he will, he may control his thinking as he chooses. Then the conclusion is unavoidable and must be true in all its comprehensiveness that, by control of his mental actions, a man can make himself whatever he chooses.

A glance at the principles will show the accuracy of this conclusion with all its unlimited possibilities. Thinking is the primal action and the cause, immediate or remote, of all other human actions and conditions. Man can control his thinking absolutely. Control of the cause controls the result; but thinking is the cause; then by controlling his thinking man may make himself whatever he will.

It is true that complete control of the thinking is at first dependent upon certain elements of character, but character itself is the result of habitual

thinking, and therefore it may be entirely changed by appropriate thinking; that is, control of the thinking, by turning it into new channels, may destroy or remove present elements of character and substitute new ones. This is merely dropping out the objectionable elements and putting desirable ones in their places, which all depends upon the exercise of correct choice and persistence in maintaining that choice.

Tremendous as the results may be, the conditions by which they may be attained are wonderfully simple. As has been so often said in these pages, it is one's own thinking which produces his action and determines its character. Even if he is induced to modify his thinking and change his opinions because of the advice or argument of another, yet such changes are at last made by himself, and thus the opinions become his own.

Change of character is not re-formation nor creation in the exact meaning of the words. It is not a making over of the old materials into something different, nor is it a making of new materials. In point of fact, by this process nothing is, of itself, either changed or modified. The whole work consists in ceasing to do certain things and in doing certain other things. The man stops thinking

certain thoughts and consequently stops doing certain acts of a corresponding character, and he thinks thoughts of another character and therefore performs other acts. A thought is never made over into another kind of thought, nor is any act ever made over into an act of some other kind.

The liar who stops thinking about lying cannot lie any more; he necessarily tells the truth because there is not anything else that he can do. The thief who stops thinking about stealing cannot steal; indeed, whatever he may have been before, he is no longer a thief; it was his thinking that made him a thief; and only a return to that thinking can make him a thief again. If a man stops thinking wrongful, immoral, or sinful thoughts, then the wrongful, immoral, or sinful actions cannot occur under any circumstances, and the man is no longer immoral or sinful. It is the same in all wrongdoing. Neither the liar nor the thief has changed anything either in himself or outside himself, but each has simply stopped thinking certain thoughts and consequently has stopped doing certain deeds. One element is removed and another is substituted in its place. This comprises the whole work of re-formation, or reformation, so called.

Every man, if he will set himself about it, may,

by persistent practice, put any class of erroneous thoughts entirely out of his mind and thus wholly destroy that error so far as he is himself concerned. He has then freed himself from an extraneous something which was attached to him like a barnacle to a ship, preventing his progress. When these are all cast away, the man will stand out in his own true character, manifesting his real self, and ready for either the smooth or stormy seas which he may encounter on his way.

The same man may, with even less effort, accept a true thought and, by earnest conviction and constant recognition, make it his own. It then becomes a part of himself, coloring his whole life and making him different from what he would have been without it. In this particular he has literally builded himself anew, and there is no limit to a man's reconstruction of himself by this method.

This aspect of evil, of our relation to it, and of the method of its avoidance, eradication, and destruction changes the entire view of the subject, places it on a new basis, and removes many of the difficulties which have been connected with it.

Inherited tendencies are a barrier to action in compliance with this principle only in so far as they may be more difficult to overcome because deeper

seated and of longer standing. They do not constitute an exception. The control of inherited tendencies in thinking is like the control of all other thinking, is prosecuted in the same way, and may be wholly within one's own power. Whatever their character or the attendant difficulties, they stand in the same relation to the person, his thinking, and his actions as do all others. Whatever the inheritance, it can be utterly destroyed by persistently refusing to think those thoughts which conduce to it. That which is called "the disposition," or any other peculiarity, however strongly intrenched by inheritance or long-continued habit, can be changed; objectionable qualities can be eliminated, desirable ones can be cultivated and enlarged, and others can be added. There is not any predestination nor any fatality except as one makes it by his own thinking or lack of thinking. This statement of the situation shows the absurdity of the doctrine of fatality, at least when applied to human beings and their actions. The only limitation is that which one makes for himself by his own thinking or through his failure to control his thinking.

One person inherits a tendency toward music and cultivates it by continuous mental application, resulting in wonderful attainments. A second per-

son, with equal initial advantage, follows some other course, and the latent musical ability is never developed. He makes something else of himself. A third, with less natural capacity for music, spends a lifetime in its cultivation, but does not attain the proficiency of the first, who had at the beginning of his career large advantages derived from the thinking and actions of his ancestors; yet the relative progress of the third may be as great or even greater.

Two persons inherit a tendency toward some evil course; one allows his thoughts to run in that direction to his own destruction, while the other resolutely takes the opposite way with his thinking and makes a true man of himself. The number of such instances will never be known because the one who corrects his evil tendencies prefers not to parade his earlier defects. There are not any "born criminals," if by that term it is meant that they cannot govern their inherited tendencies and escape from them. The plea of an inherited tendency is never a valid excuse for an evil deed, though it is a sufficient reason for the palliation of man's condemnation of his fellow-man, and also for holding out to him a helping hand to steady him over the rough places along the way of life.

After the usual consideration of inheritance,

education, surroundings, and past indulgence, the fact remains that the man's own thinking is the cause of his actions and that by abandoning the thought the actions will also be abandoned. By this method, instead of lopping off the outer branches, the axe is applied to the root of the error and the whole is destroyed. When this is understood, what an immense advantage it will be to all mankind! They will then soon learn that it is far easier to control the thoughts than to control the actions when the thoughts are not controlled — to destroy the root instead of wasting time with the branches.

Even physical conditions, acquired or otherwise, are the results of previous thinking, and, because they have been produced by thinking, changed they must be if a change in thinking is persistently continued. Thinking is the monarch who governs the man and everything connected with him. The invisible and intangible everywhere dominate the visible and tangible. Invisible gravitation controls not only the minute atoms, but the worlds, the suns, and the whole material universe. A passing change of thought changes the expression of the face for the moment, and if the thought becomes habitual, the changed expression becomes permanent. So with everything else about the body, even the

motions and attitudes in walking, standing, and sitting — whatever a man does. The man is not subject to his features, but the features are subject to the man, that is, to his thinking; and they change as his character changes — as his habit of thinking changes.

All varieties of character-reading by the examination of external conditions and actions point to the fact that it is the invisible and intangible mind which fashions not only the face but the whole body. It is the same with each item in the whole physical system, because all changes occur in accordance with invariable principle. It is not the bones of the skull that shape the brain, but the brain that shapes the skull; and, as it is mental activity that develops and enlarges the brain, so it must be mental activity that changes and shapes the skull. Thus the mind by its action builds the whole body. By controlling the builder, man builds and fashions himself; therefore he is his own architect.

There is a preponderance of defective human architecture because comparatively few have recognized the all-important connection between thinking and action; and a large proportion of the few who do recognize it, doubting the possibility of success, do not make any attempt to test the principle; while

still others, after a spasmodic effort, are too indolent, mentally, to persevere.

Man does not reach all his aspirations at a single bound. Complete success in changing the thinking requires persistent and perhaps long-continued practice, but it will bring results as permanent as the change which has been made in the thinking. "We build the stairs by which we climb," and he who would build well the mansion for his soul must be persistent, courageous, and confident.

XLIII

POSSIBILITY OF PERFECTION

AVOIDANCE of wrong because of the desire to escape its results, even though that motive has been most prominent in all the world's history, is not the highest incentive, for it is only a negative aspect of the moral problem. There is something better. Doing right because it is right is an action which is positive in its character; and to perform the right action without any thought of reward and solely for the sake of being right is to act from the highest and holiest motive; but this does not hinder nor prevent the reward which always follows right action.

The tree does not put forth its leaves and blossoms because of the possible fruit which may result, but it does certain things simply for the sake of the doing; and the fruit appears. Avoidance of evil thinking always brings its natural recompense, and this recompense is as much its normal outgrowth as the fruit of the tree; yet it is as distinct from all consideration of price or wages as that fruit is. This

kind of fruitage is the most desirable that man ever receives or enjoys. It is "the Fruit of the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden."

Perfection is the ultimate goal of man's best and highest aspiration, but it is an attainment for which, as yet, men have hardly dared to hope. They have been taught that it is beyond their reach except as it is approached through the gateway of death or obtained by the intervention of some miraculous power; yet, in a manner more or less continuous and earnest or hesitating and desultory, every man desires to do better and to be better than he is. From this desire comes the progress of the world, for it is always urging men toward the achievement of something better than what they now have; and, whatever may have been accomplished, this desire outruns every achievement and beckons forward to something better still.

It is a universal law that progress creates the desire for still further progress, as in mechanics the improvement of a machine stimulates its further improvement. There may be lapses, one may even go backward for a time, but the desire for better things is as inherent in the heart of man as his very existence itself, and it must finally become manifest.

Though man may not consciously recognize the

full meaning of this aspiration, yet it really includes the desire for ultimate perfection and is a means for its accomplishment because it necessitates continual progress in that direction, even though the progress may be slow and irregular. No man can be entirely satisfied until the last possible ideal has been reached; and this must ultimately be the realization of perfection.

To say that this perfection is not within man's reach is to deny the goodness of God, because such a statement implies that God has implanted in man's nature aspirations toward good only to torture him by refusing to allow their fruition. That would be a cruel mockery, and if it were true, man would be better than his Creator. But to say that perfection is indeed within reach of every one is to extend to mankind that encouragement which constitutes the largest possible incentive to persistent effort. The infinite Father has not given man the aspiration for better things merely to deny him at the last. He does not mock His children. The attainment of this goal is more than a possibility: it is a certainty.

The method of securing this object has been overlooked because of its extreme simplicity. Persistence and steadfastness of choice in the right direction are all that is required. It will not be

accomplished in a moment, nor in a day, nor a year, perhaps not in a lifetime on this earth, but man may be sure of its attainment. The world of mankind must go on in its progress until at last, even on this earth, it shall have gained it. Whenever or wherever these desires may reach their fruition, this we know, that each step taken in that direction, whether here or elsewhere, whether now or hereafter, is a step that is taken forever, and is just so much accomplished both for the one who has taken that step and for all mankind. The good each man does shines for all other men, and some one sees it even though but dimly.

In one view which may be taken of man, he appears to be an aggregation of thoughts massed into one personality or individuality. This may not be the most exalted nor the most comprehensive way in which he can be considered, but it is one correct aspect. On this basis, if an analysis of the mental elements which constitute that complex being whom we call man should be carried to its ultimate so as to make a complete separation of part from part, the final result would be the possibility to divide these elements into two classes, one composed of thoughts which are wholly good without any evil whatever in them; the other of those which are not good and do

not contain any good whatever.[1] Every man may cast out of himself all those thoughts which are not good. By doing that persistently the time must come when all such thinking will have ceased, leaving only those thoughts which are wholly good. Then must he manifest perfection.

This simple reasoning is a complete and logical demonstration of the possibility that man may attain perfection. It is also a portrayal of the simple but sure method by which perfection may certainly be reached. Here is the Archimedean lever with which to move the world, and not the lever only but the fulcrum that Archimedes lacked, and, furthermore, the place on which the operator is to stand. Each step will be an elevation into a purer, diviner atmosphere and will itself be an incentive to further effort.

It is as though one clothed in white were also enveloped in exterior garments of black through which some of the white is shining. As he drops off the outside garments one after another, more and more of the white shines through, until finally when the last dark garment has been discarded, only

[1] The word "good" is ordinarily used with more or less looseness of meaning, but here it is used with that absolute signification which admits of no comparative degree — the good is wholly good; the separation is complete; the not-good has no good in it.

the pure white remains. Thus, when the dark thoughts of discord and evil are cast away, there remains only the pure being, Man, as God, his Father, created him.

Because some sense of moral right, however undeveloped it may be, exists in each one, therefore each one sees a condition for himself which he thinks is better than he has already reached, and he also recognizes that some of his thoughts are either wholly erroneous or at least contain somewhat of error. He is also conscious that within himself he has the power to stop thinking some of those erroneous thoughts if he chooses. Ability to perform an action once means the ability to do it again by the exercise of the same choice and the same power, and this means the ability to do it every time it is necessary. Each repetition is accomplished with less effort than before, and so the work goes on until erroneous thoughts no more intrude.

It may be claimed that this requires acute analysis of one's thoughts and that the wheat and the tares are so wonderfully alike that it is sometimes impossible, even for the wisest, who scrutinize most closely and see most clearly, to decide accurately between the more delicate shades of good and evil as they lie in close contact. In actual practice such

nice analysis and discrimination are not necessary. A man has only to banish the one thought which he knows to be discordant or erroneous, and to do this he does not need any further understanding. The eradication of this one thought is the beginning of the work, and this beginning can be made at once. When that has been accomplished, and the habit of not thinking that thought has been established, the understanding gained in the process will show some other thinking that is wrong, and the experience with the first thought will have given wisdom as well as strength to eradicate a second one. Then he will have clearer and more definite ideas with regard to others about which he has not been so decided. It is only one at a time; but the removal of one reveals another so long as there is one discordant thought left to be revealed, and this course persevered in necessarily removes every evil thought and leaves at last only the absolute good — that is, it leaves only the perfect.

In practice, therefore, the fact that it is now impossible to draw an accurate line, leaving all the good thoughts on one side and all the bad ones on the other, is neither an obstacle to success nor an occasion for delay. Indeed, this inability to complete the analysis at first may be a positive advantage,

especially in view of the fact that if the whole were attempted at once, the magnitude of the work might be overwhelming. Besides, it is easier to attack the host in detail rather than in a mass, and prosecution of the work always brings wisdom and understanding as fast as they can be used. The simplicity arising out of the absence of any need of nice discrimination and analysis, or of special educational or philosophic attainments, or of the recognition of the exact line accurately dividing the good from the evil, — all of these combined constitute one of the wonderful conditions of moral progress which makes its pursuit possible for all mankind.

There is nothing mysterious, nor supernatural, nor occult, nor anything beyond the bounds of natural knowledge in this, nor does it require any remarkable attainment of wisdom, nor any wonderful ability, analytic or otherwise. It only requires that there shall be the consciousness of one error, and the determination to avoid it. By practice we find that we can leave off that one, and that convinces us that we can do the same with the next. Each point attained is not only a positive advantage in itself, but also in the other fact that it shows us that we have the ability to take the next step. The way is indeed strait, but it is simple and within the

comprehension of every one. Then every one can walk in it, for every one can change his thoughts at least once in response to his own choice, and when he has done this once, can do so a second time. This means that man may arrive at the goal of absolute perfection because by choice he may change one of his thoughts and by persistence all of them; and, if he will, he may go in this way until he no longer thinks any sinful, immoral, wrongful, erroneous, or discordant thoughts, and when he has accomplished this, since all his thinking will be right, his conduct must be right also. When all men do thus, all wrong will cease to be.

Exalted and sublime as this ideal is, it is eminently practical and it should enter positively into every occupation and inspire the regulation of every life. It will not interfere with any rightful pursuit nor hinder efficiency in any direction, but it will simplify and purify every action. It will not make any man less manly nor any woman less womanly, but it will make each immeasurably better — the man more of a man and the woman more of a woman in every true relationship of life. Even if we advance only a little toward the goal, that little is just so much surely accomplished for all time.

This is an illustration and elucidation of the dec-

laration made by Jesus:[1] "Whosoever will do His will" (whosoever desires to do right, for God's will is absolute rightness) "shall know of the doctrine," or teaching. It also demonstrates the absolute accuracy of his statement, because whosoever willeth to do this, that is, whosoever really desires to do right, will diligently pursue that desire, and as he progresses will also progress in his recognition of what is right ("shall know of the doctrine"), and, knowing that, shall know how to attain it. Many have failed because they were self-deceived into thinking they were desiring to do right (to do God's will) when, in fact, they sought only the accomplishment of their own erroneous wishes. They did not seek the right regardless of all other things, therefore they failed; but even if they did fail, that failure was only for a time, for ultimately they will see their mistake and correct it. There is never a failure that is not followed by the possibility of something better than went before. The desire for better things survives all failure and demands effort toward their attainment, and that desire will never cease to urge one on until the object is reached.

The traveller often approaches a point in his journey beyond which he cannot see his way, a place

[1] John vii. 16.

where all things seem to end; yet always as soon as he reaches that point, the vista opens, and he finds the path for his feet stretching farther out into the distance. His foot is never planted on the last spot within his vision without his being able to see the place beyond for another step. It may be only a very little way, and it may be either to the right or to the left, but the light shines on the path a little in advance; and when one who is really striving after the right shall reach that which seems to be the last point before him, there will then come a new gleam lighting up the way still farther on. This is the helpful element in all ideals. They are always in advance of present accomplishment, and when once attained new and better ones always disclose themselves.

The man who is in earnest, who seeks right for its own sake and not for any less worthy object, who dares to abandon former opinions for better ones newly perceived, and who dares to do the right, can always see the way to at least one point farther. The danger lies in not daring and therefore not doing. There is no occasion for discouragement. We know better than we do, and because we know better than we do, next time we can do better than we have done this time. An ideal attained always reveals

another and diviner possibility. Each is a bow of promise beckoning onward. God has arranged it so in the beautiful order of His creation.

Man has vainly sought the fountain of youth in things outside of himself. It is within. "The inner joys and virtues are the essential part of life's business," and if these are not obstructed by the weeds and briers of discordant thinking, they will flower most beautifully and fruit most bountifully in all outward actions — and in life eternal.

Every man has the divine spark within himself. He will never be without a guide to his actions if he will only follow as far as he can see in the direction toward absolute right. He need not wait, but may at once begin his journey, filled with the certainty of at last reaching the pinnacle of success in the goal of perfection. Even when perfection is achieved, though the difficulties and toils of the way are all behind him, he will find before him all the beauty and glory of God's infinite universe of absolute and perfect good in its limitless diversity. In this field a man can never lack objects of interest for the exercise of his choice and the expenditure of his activity, because the variety of God's good is as infinite as His creation, and man's progress will be from glory to glory throughout endless duration.

XLIV

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

THUS far the subject has been discussed from scientific, philosophic, ethical, and moral points of view, but it will be incomplete if dismissed without some consideration of its relation to the teaching of Jesus, the Christ. To some minds this will appear important, to others perhaps it will seem to be only a repetition of statements already made, while those who have never examined it in this aspect may find in his teaching a phase not before suspected.

The moral and religious features of the work of Jesus so eclipse all others that he is seldom thought of as a philosopher or a scientist. It is the more general opinion that he promulgated certain rules for the guidance of mankind in their personal and social relations, but more especially in their religious duties, whereby they may attain more harmonious conditions, greater morality, higher spirituality, and therefore more peace and happiness here, and possibly eternal bliss hereafter. Those

who hold this opinion think that he did his work without the aid of philosophy or science and without any of the arts of the logician; hence they suppose that he held such matters more or less in contempt, and that there is no connection, association, nor relationship between his utterances and those of philosophy and science. Indeed, scarcely a generation ago it was stoutly declared that science and religion were in open conflict; nor is it so very long since the opinion was widely prevalent that the teaching of Jesus is without system, and that it consists of independent, disjointed declarations, having little or no connection with one another, and sometimes, if not often, contradictory — an opinion which has not yet wholly disappeared.

That there is a basic system, either philosophic or scientific, on which rests all that Jesus said and did, would be emphatically denied by many who think themselves his devoted followers. They venerate his words as the arbitrary edict of a god, and they think that any other theory concerning them or him would detract from the authority of his utterances and the sublimity of his position. They would consider it degrading to suppose that his rules for conduct are permeated by scientific truths, and still more so to suppose that the authority of his utter-

ances could be strengthened by any recognition of their relationship to philosophic or scientific principles.

It is most assuredly true that Jesus did not elaborate any philosophic theory whatever, nor did he make any pretence to a systematic or scientific arrangement of his subjects, nor did he make any appeal to men's reasoning faculties by the use of logical formulas. It is one of his strongly marked peculiarities that in most cases he merely cast his statements in the axiomatic form and, without argumentation, left their accuracy and truth to be perceived by the same means that the truth of the axiom is perceived.

His complete abnegation of self, his exact compliance with the rules that he promulgated, his measureless love for all men, even for his enemies, — these have moved men to become his followers and have taken possession of their hearts and minds to the exclusion of other things. This ceases to be a wonder when we consider how far he transcends all others in these characteristics.

Granting the most extreme claims that have been put forth regarding his divinity, still, if those claims are true, — even because they are true, — his utterances must be in accord with the absolute basic

truths of existence; and science and philosophy at their best are only attempts to set forth and explain the facts of existence, which are the divine truths of God as manifested in the things about us. The ultimate facts of existence and the knowledge and explanation of them, so far as this knowledge and explanation are accurate, must constitute the only correct, enduring, and elemental basis of either science or philosophy, and equally so of religion. All truths, by whatever name they may be called, must rest at last upon this basis and must be made up of these elements; therefore each must be an expression of its portion of one entirely harmonious whole, and consequently they must all be so linked together in unity as to constitute a perfect system.

If this is the condition, then it must be possible to make such an examination of the utterances of Jesus as to discover their basis in the fundamental truths of correctly stated science and also to find their explanation in the principles of sound and enduring philosophy. The world may not be ready to accept this proposition now, because the statements of neither science, nor philosophy, nor religion are yet either without deficiency or without flaw. When they are so, it will be possible to see that the connection between each part and every other part, which

at present appears broken, is complete, and that each is in perfect harmony with all the others. Then it will be possible to show to the whole human race the most powerful and convincing reasons for the existence of Jesus' precepts, and the supreme reason why they should be obeyed. This will immensely enhance the value of those precepts in the eyes of those who look to reason rather than to authority, and it will not detract in the slightest from the veneration and allegiance of those who accept him chiefly on the basis of his deific authority, while it will furnish both classes with abundant reason why his words are as the words of God.

An examination will show that the principles set forth in the preceding pages are inherent in the constitution of man as he has been fashioned by his Creator, and an application of them to the ethical rules which Jesus gave to mankind for the guidance of human conduct in the affairs of social life will show that those rules rest for their foundation and reasonableness, some wholly, others in part, upon these principles. Because those rules are in accord with immutable principle, they are scientific in the full meaning of the word, and they are as exact and universal within their domain as are the rules of mathematics in the domain of that science. Thus

considered, these scientific principles furnish an explanation of his rules and an elucidation of their character which will make them better understood and which, without depriving them of a particle of their authority and sacredness, but instead adding to both, will remove them forever from the domain of arbitrary domination and dictation where they have so long stood in the minds of many.

Some may sneer and say that this would place ethics and morality among the exact sciences; but, in view of the inextricable confusion and contradictions among the opinions now held regarding these subjects, even those who sneer must admit that if such a result could be achieved, it would be exceptionally desirable. There must be fundamental principles in morals as well as in mathematics if human beings are not a congeries of haphazard happenings, but are created or developed in accordance with principle; and there must be a true science of morals just as there is of mechanics, and that science must be just as exact in its principles and just as inflexible in its multifarious applications. Each step toward the elucidation of that science must be as much more valuable than the earlier discoveries in the natural sciences and mathematics as morals are of more importance to mankind than are mechanics.

The basis on which so many of Jesus' rules rest for their foundation is not anywhere stated in more directly scientific terms than in what he says of adultery. He recognizes the wisdom and validity of the old law prohibiting the crime, but he sees also that the scope of the law is too limited. As interpreted before his day it included only that part of the crime which is, so to speak, above ground, but it did not interfere with the root from which it springs, the thoughts which precede and produce the act. For the destruction of a plant, not only must the top be cut off, which the law already attempted to do, but the root which nourishes the top must be dug up and destroyed. If the thoughts which produce the crime are allowed to continue, the outward and visible actions are liable to appear with renewed vigor regardless of the prohibition.[1]

These statements are scientific; Jesus quotes the law approvingly and then, because of these scientific reasons, he adds: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her," that is, whosoever thinks adulterous thoughts about her, "hath committed adultery with her already,"[2] thus so interpreting the

[1] Lao-tsze says: "Not contemplating what kindles desire keeps the heart unconfused."

[2] Matthew v. 27–30.

terms of the law as to include in its prohibition not only the crime but all those thoughts which contribute to it and produce it. He does not destroy the law, but by his interpretation he completes it. Compliance with what might be called his addition to the law would render the law useless as it stood before he made that addition, because the offence against which the law aimed cannot occur if the thought which would cause the offence has been excluded from the mind. His interpretation of the law thus becomes the vital part of the prohibition.

His position in this case rests for its validity upon two distinct points: First, thinking is the cause of the act; second, if the cause is removed by ceasing to think the thought, then that which would be the consequence of such thinking cannot occur and the act cannot be committed; therefore his prohibition of adulterous thinking is strictly scientific, finding the reason for its existence in pure science.

Jesus follows the simple statement of his proposition with the two tremendous illustrations of the hand and the eye: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." Whatever other meaning these metaphorical words may convey, they surely indicate that whenever one's thought is

the cause of his wrong actions, though it may seem to him as desirable as his eye or his hand, that thought is to be plucked out or cut off and as utterly cast away as the eye or the hand might be. This also is as strictly scientific as his interpretative addition to the law.

Thus we see that his words in this instance rest for their basis on sound psychological principles as modern science has discovered and explained them. His form of expression has the characteristics of an exact statement of scientific principle, viz. accuracy and absence of modification or exception. All this removes the precept from the charge of being mere dictatorial domination, vindicates its claim to scientific character, and, because there cannot be any more exception to this rule than to a rule in mathematics, it is at least one step toward placing morality among the exact sciences.

What Jesus says about murder is similar in character. The law prohibited killing.[1] Anger is the root of murder as lust is the root of adultery. When cultivated and intensified, anger finds its final expression and natural result in murder. Jesus affixed the same penalty to unexpressed anger that the law affixed to murder, thus placing the unuttered thought

[1] Matthew v. 21–24.

which might cause murder under the same prohibition as murder itself. Thus, in full accord with the scientific proposition, he makes the thought (the cause) the essential thing, for without it there would not be any consequence. Having dealt with the cause, he has no occasion to deal with consequences, because without causes there would not be any consequences; therefore for murder itself he expresses neither prohibition nor penalty, and this, again, is exactly scientific. When all anger is excluded from the mind there will not be any murder. His method in this is the same that he pursued in his discussion of adultery and is equally scientific.[1]

The completeness with which Jesus would have us exclude anger from our minds is shown in his metaphorical statement: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Note here that the person addressed is not directed to do anything with his brother. His sole

[1] The same principle is observed in the practice in criminal courts where it is held of the first importance to prove the "motive," or the mental state which caused the act; only they use it to assist in establishing the guilt of the person, he used it to prevent the guilty action.

offence consists in the fact that he remembers that his brother has something against him, and the one thing for him to do is himself to become "reconciled" to his brother. The literal definition of the Greek word here rendered "be reconciled" is "be changed throughout." Then he must not only put anger out of his own mind, but he must do this so completely as not to remember that his brother has anything against him. When he has done this, he is "changed throughout." This is complete exclusion of discordant thinking.

His precept, "Judge not,"[1] is of the same sort, and equally scientific. Judgment is almost universally considered necessary and praiseworthy; yet any one who analyzes mental conditions must recognize that condemnation is the discordant mental beginning of very much that is wrong. Condemnation of others has been both the cause and the justification of the worst acts of humanity, including murder, war, and butchery generally. Each atrocity or outrage has resulted from the condemnation of one man by another because of something that one has done or has failed to do, and each war has been caused by similar condemnation of one nation by another.

[1] Matthew vii. 1–5. The Greek word which is here rendered "judge" is also elsewhere translated "condemn."

All judgment, or condemnation, exists first in thought before it can find expression in either words or deeds. The condemnatory thought is discordant, therefore on scientific grounds alone, considering the purposes of health without regard to any question of morals, condemnation ought to be excluded from the mind. But this proposition applies in an equally scientific way to morality, and as morals are the more important, there is so much the greater reason why Jesus should say, "Judge not," and it is equally a scientific necessity that his requirement should be, as it is, so sweeping as to prohibit all such thoughts.

If the precept of Jesus concerning anger is complied with in the perfect way indicated by the case of the man bringing his gift to the altar, then this one relating to judgment becomes unnecessary, because when the recognition of an offence has been so completely thrust out of mind that one is no longer aware that another has anything against him, there cannot be any condemnation or judgment. On the other hand, if one does not judge (condemn), there will not be any anger. In this way do Jesus' precepts work together and harmonize, each aiding toward compliance with the others.

His precept, "Take no thought for the morrow,"[1]

[1] Matthew vi. 34.

has been looked upon as unreasonable if not impossible. "Take no anxious thought for the morrow," is the rendering in the Revised Version, and if this is accepted, even those who object most strongly to the rule as expressed by the earlier translation must acknowledge that as it appears in the later form it is reasonable, wise, and practicable; and it then becomes another instance of a rule resting on scientific principles for its foundation. Anxiety is a form of discordant thinking, and the conditions of exact science require its exclusion from the mind, just as set forth by Jesus' precept.

Perhaps in no place has failure to understand him been greater than in connection with his precept, "Resist not evil," which, in part, rests on the same scientific foundation as his propositions already considered. This rule is a practical continuation into a more general form of his precepts concerning anger, the recognition that one's brother has something against him, and the one respecting judgment or condemnation. Whoever complies with these in their fulness will not violate this one, for he will not allow his mind to be occupied either by thoughts of the wrong done him, or by anger, or by condemnation. Harboring thoughts of wrong at once arouses condemnation and anger, and from these comes the

impulse to defend one's self and to punish the offender — to resist the evil; but if these are not allowed, then the desire to resist will not arise.

Unnumbered centuries of practice contrary to these precepts have made compliance with them seem ineffective, unmanly, or cowardly; yet evil has never diminished in consequence of such methods. From a little brand which at first could have easily been extinguished by right mental control conflagrations have developed which have brought ruin and desolation in their wake. Hatred, bitterness, blighting of homes and lives, legal strife, murders, wars, and all forms of outrage and wickedness have grown from small beginnings which would have disappeared instantly by compliance with these precepts.

His own course is the most brilliant example of the wisdom of this precept. He did not resist evil under the severest provocations of illegal arrest on false charges, trial before prejudiced judges who had decided beforehand that he must die, and execution by the same authority which had declared him innocent. The result is an ever widening and deepening stream of influence which has gone on through all the centuries since, and which shall continue through the centuries to come, until all error has disappeared from among men.

In the language of the old Hebrew lawgiver: "Thus shall ye put away evil from among you;" and in no other way can the putting away be so thoroughly accomplished as by obeying his precept, "Resist not evil." The influence of the one who obeys this is not limited to himself alone. The power of his good thought extends even to the enemy, and it will soon begin its work of transformation in his mind. Like the rays of the sun, the thought which causes one to refrain from resistance in the way that he ought, penetrates the darkest places, destroying the noxious germs of enmity, bitterness, and strife.

Ruskin said: "There is no music in a rest, but there's the making of music in it;" so, too, nonresistance of evil is a rest in which there is the making of that celestial music which is an expression of the divine harmony.

The advantage of harmonious thinking is scientifically set forth in the Beatitudes.[1] The meek, the merciful, they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the peacemakers have each dismissed some form of discordant thinking, and they are among the blessed. Their blessedness is the result of their mental condition. The climax oc-

[1] Matthew v. 2–12.

curs in what he says of the pure in heart, "for they shall see God." Purity of heart can only be attained by the complete exclusion of every impure or discordant thought, and they who have attained this have already the kingdom of heaven within them, and God dwells in His kingdom and they shall see Him. This, too, is strictly scientific.

His precepts touching forgiveness rest on the same basis. The word "forgive" means to let go, to put away, to cast out, to send away; and this is the meaning not only of the English word, but of the Greek word of which it is a translation. The essential of forgiveness, then, lies in casting out of the mind the wrong or offending thought. He would have us always forgive [1] as we would be forgiven.[2] Each one who earnestly desires forgiveness knows that he himself wishes to have the last remembrance or thought of the error which he has committed put away and blotted out forever from the mind of the one whom he has offended; therefore this complete casting away of all the discordant thoughts about another is the essential constituent element of complete forgiveness. It is also required by the principles of exact science as well as by the words of Jesus found in other connections.

[1] Matthew xviii. 21, 22. [2] Matthew vi. 12.

This leads to a consideration of the Golden Rule, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise," [1] a precept which includes within its terms all his ethical teaching. Down in the heart of every human being is the desire not only to be exempt from physical injury by others, but also from their evil or erroneous thoughts as well. If each one should avoid discordant thinking about all others as he would have others avoid it about himself, it would terminate all discordant or erroneous thinking of every kind, and therefore all discordant conduct would be ended. There would not be any evil in the world, and its banishment would be accomplished without any resistance whatever; indeed, resistance of evil prevents forgiveness, perpetuates evil, and frustrates the grand object sought, which is its destruction. This is again the application of exact science to questions of morality.

When the lawyer asked Jesus which is the greatest requirement of the law, he answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." [2] God is absolute perfection. When a man loves perfection with *all* his heart, and

[1] Luke vi. 31. [2] Mark xii. 30.

soul, and mind, and strength, there will not be any place for inharmonious thoughts. God is love; and when one loves love with his whole being, he will not have any discordant thoughts, for in such love and in such loving there is no discord. All this means: Fill the mind full with love for God, and when the mind is full of this love, neither imperfection nor discord can enter, but they will be as a dream of the night which was never remembered.

All this finds its culmination in what may appropriately be called the climax of his ethical precepts, the one which directs men to the supreme act of love: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies." [1] Love is perfect harmony. Hate is discord. Before one can love his enemies, condemnation, anger, hate, desire for revenge, envy, jealousy, covetousness, and even "righteous indignation" toward them, must all be utterly cast out of the mind along with every other inharmonious thought. The precept necessitates this exclusion, because all these are inimical to love and cannot exist in the mind where love is, nor can love exist in the mind where these discordant thoughts are. Love and hate cannot both occupy the same mind at the same time. The

[1] Matthew v. 44–48.

exclusion of hate is the preparation for love, and the entertainment of love is the prohibition of hate; hence this precept also stands on a basis which is distinctly scientific.

The language which he used in this connection, when stripped of its explanatory illustrations, reads thus: —

1. "Love your enemies.

2. "That ye may be the children of your Father in heaven.

3. "Ye therefore shall be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." [1]

That love which loves enemies has nothing but love for any man. This means the exclusion of every discordant thought. The result of this exclusion will be perfection. Perfection is a dizzy height for man to contemplate. The best men have looked toward it, but have not dared to hope for it, either for themselves or their fellows, except as the result of a miracle; and the scientists, philosophers,

[1] This is the language of the Revised Version and is almost universally admitted to be more nearly the correct translation of the original Greek. "Ye shall be perfect" is not a command, but is a scientific declaration of what will result from the abandonment of discordant thinking to such an extent as to enable one to love his enemies; *i.e.* the complete exclusion of all discord from the mind.

and best ethical teachers have never dared more than to hint at it except as the remotest possibility; but Jesus taught it; science and philosophy confirm it; and each Christian with humbleness of heart can look up, take courage, and determine to win it. That this can be accomplished has been made plain again and again in these pages. We can love our enemies only after we have first excluded all discordant thinking about them; that done, we can truly love them; and then we shall show forth that we are indeed our Father's children, as perfect as He is perfect; and that is absolute perfection.

Wonderful as this perfection is, yet every precept of Jesus, the Christ, aims at nothing less, and each of them if complied with in its completeness will bring this result. That he did not require impossibilities of us is seen in the logical demonstration that this seemingly most impossible of all his requirements is possible of attainment. Indeed, each one of his precepts which is here considered may be fulfilled to its ultimate by following his method — the exclusion of discordant thinking from the mind. Therefore no man need be discouraged by the tremendousness nor by the sublimity and glory of the object. Each may say with supreme confidence and humility: "I, too, can master my own mind."

No man is working alone, for God Himself works always with him who is seeking the right.

"Ye therefore shall be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

XLV

A LAST WORD

THERE is no more fitting counsel for the close of this book than is contained in the following words from *The School of Life*, by William R. Alger:—

"And now there is one more lesson for us to learn, the climax of all the rest; namely, to make a personal application to ourselves of everything which we know. Unless we master this lesson, and act on it, the other lessons are virtually useless, and thus robbed of their essential glory. The only living end or aim of everything we experience, of every truth we are taught, is the practical use we make of it for the enrichment of the soul, the attuning of the thoughts and passions, the exaltation of life. . . . When we *do* what we *know*, then first does it put on vital lustre and become divinely precious."

RIGHT AND WRONG THINKING

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